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A Case Study of the Establishment of an International Spanish Academy in Canada

by

Janice D. Aubry

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

Department of Elementary Education

Edmonton, Alberta

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August 25, 2003

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **A Case Study of the Establishment of an International Spanish Academy in Canada** submitted by **Janice Darlene Aubry** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Education**.

Dr. Joe Wu, Supervisor

Dr. Lynn M. Gordon

Dr. Tara J. Fenwick

July 22, 2003

ABSTRACT

This study documents and examines the establishment of one of the first International Spanish Academies in Canada. It explores the movement of this new, special form of Spanish-English bilingual programming, from a theoretical program through to the end of its first year of establishment. It illuminates the experiences of an English-speaking teacher, two Spanish-speaking teachers, a student, a parent, and the school principal, as they pioneer the implementation of this new alternative program within a public education system. As well, a detailed description of the nature of this unique form of bilingual education is provided, including insights into the new directions being taken by both new bilingual programs and heritage language bilingual programs in western Canada. This study has implications for those involved in initiating or supporting new programs, especially second language programs, alternative programs, or other programs that are unique and innovative.

DEDICATION

To my four wonderful sons

Tristan, Jolan, Ashton, Braedan.

You amaze me each day with your gifts

and make me so proud of who you have become.

I will love you always.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my husband, Allan, for his love, support and sacrifices while I pursue my dreams of motherhood, a career, and graduate studies.

I thank my parents, Ernie and Lynn Kozak, for their love and lifelong support in all of my pursuits.

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I am indebted to the staff, parents and students of Escuela Mill Creek School for welcoming me into an exciting period of their lives.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

For the past twenty-five years, western Canada has proven to be fertile ground for the development of successful models of a unique form of heritage language bilingual education within the public education system. In Alberta alone, heritage language bilingual programs have been available for many years in the public school system in six languages: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hebrew, Polish, and Ukrainian (Alberta Learning, 2003b). The first of such programs, the Ukrainian bilingual program, was initiated in 1974 (Prokop, 1990; Sokolowski, 1991), opening the doors to the establishment of future heritage language bilingual programs, and proving to be the model for subsequent programs in the three prairie provinces.

For the next 25 years, new heritage language bilingual programs developed in western Canada. The main purposes of these programs over that period of time were those of language and cultural maintenance. However, in 1999, with the development of the *Framework for Bilingual Programming in International Languages (Kindergarten to Grade 12): Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education*[1] (Governments of Alberta, Manitoba & Saskatchewan [GAMS], 1999), the goals of this form of bilingual programming shifted. Instead of focusing mainly on heritage language and cultural preservation, a more balanced focus on both heritage language and cultural maintenance, and the development of skills to foster international perspectives and

---

[1] For ease of reference to this document, the *Framework for Bilingual Programming in International Languages (Kindergarten to Grade 12): Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education* (Governments of Alberta, Manitoba & Saskatchewan [GAMS], 1999) will hereto be referred to as the *Bilingual Framework*.

successful global citizenship, was being adopted. Concurrently, the heritage language bilingual program models were being renamed as bilingual international language programs. A perceived need and desire to not only look to the past, but also to the future, inspired this shift.

The advent of a new model, the International Spanish Academy, embodies this shift in bilingual programming in Alberta. In the mid-1990's, representatives of the Government of Spain, Alberta Learning and Edmonton Public Schools began discussing the possibility of establishing a new form of bilingual program in Canada, under a newly envisioned framework of the International Spanish Academies. Although this framework allowed for a wide range of programming models, it was eventually determined that the bilingual program model would be most desirable (Edmonton Public Schools, 2001a, 2001c).

Bilingual programs in western Canada are often referred to as partial immersion programs. This new Spanish-English bilingual program, which is delivered under the framework of the International Spanish Academies in Alberta, provides instruction in English for 55% of the instructional day at the elementary school level, and instruction in Spanish for 45% of the instructional day. Students generally enter into this program at the kindergarten or grade 1 level, and the program has been developed to eventually extend to grade 12. Spanish Language Arts forms the curricular foundation for the instruction of the Spanish language; the regular Alberta provincial Programs of Study for Mathematics, Physical Education and/or Health and Music are taught, using Spanish as the language of instruction. The remaining subject areas are taught in English and follow provincial Programs of Study.

At the junior high level, the International Spanish Academy was designed to deliver 40% of instructional time in Spanish. Spanish Language Arts, Mathematics and Physical Education and/or Music and Health will comprise the subject areas to be delivered in Spanish, with the remaining 60% of instructional time and the remaining subject areas to be delivered in English. At the high school level, 25% of the instructional time will be delivered in Spanish, and the remaining 75% delivered in English.

There are no special requirements, such as language requirements, academic screening, or financial requirements, for students to attend the International Spanish Academy, when entering the program at the kindergarten or grade one level. Established within the public education system, any student is eligible to enrol, and no fees are charged to attend this specialized program. For the initial year, the program planners had decided to accept all students who were entering kindergarten, grade one and grade two. In future years, students would normally enter into the program in kindergarten or grade one only, unless the student demonstrated sufficient language skills to be able to function successfully in higher grades.

A major aim of this program model is to develop high levels of both English and Spanish language proficiency in students, as well as cultural knowledge and skills, within an academic environment. The involvement of the Government of Spain in this program is intended to enhance and support these goals. As well, the new curricular elements such as international perspectives and intercultural skills foster and strengthen the development of skills to enhance global citizenship in students.

In 1998, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain and Alberta Learning signed a memorandum of understanding that provided for the establishment of the

International Spanish Academies in Alberta (Alberta Learning, 1998). In February 2001, Edmonton Public Schools approved the establishment of such a program for commencement in September 2001 (Edmonton Public Schools, 2001c). Calgary Board of Education followed a parallel process, also approving the establishment of that school district's International Spanish Academy for the following September. Until then, the International Spanish Academies, as envisioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain, had not yet begun to operate anywhere in North America. These International Spanish Academies were to be the first of their kind in Canada. The International Spanish Academy in Edmonton Public Schools would be the sixth bilingual program to be established in that school district, but its first new bilingual program since 1982. With the program being based on a newly developed *Bilingual Framework (*GAMS, 1999; Alberta Learning, 2002c), this International Spanish Academy would also reflect an updated model for bilingual programming in western Canada.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to document and examine the establishment of one of the first International Spanish Academies in Canada, the International Spanish Academy at Escuela Mill Creek School in Edmonton, Alberta. It is to document the main context and events leading to its establishment, as well as the experiences and perspectives of key participants in its establishment, as this new program moves from a theoretical program to a fully enacted one.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How does the International Spanish Academy move from a theoretical program to an enacted program? What occurs?

2. What is the experience of students, staff, administrators, and parents, as they pioneer the implementation of this new program?

Research Methods

This study employs qualitative research methods, examining and documenting the phenomenon of the establishment of one of the International Spanish Academies in Canada through case study research. The main method of data collection was through semi-structured interviews of selected members of some of the key stakeholder groups: teachers, the school administrator, a parent and a student. Further description of the research methods used in this study is provided in Chapter Three: Study Design and Procedures.

This study was conducted from an acritical perspective. The researcher in this study was an integral participant in the development of the original program planning and design of the International Spanish Academy from a central administrative position at Edmonton Public Schools. As an employee of Edmonton Public Schools and a consultant responsible for providing continuing support to the International Spanish Academy, this researcher held a unique role throughout this study.

Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into five chapters and appendices. Following this chapter, which provides an introduction to the study, Chapter Two provides a background leading to the establishment of the International Spanish Academy and a review of its related literature. Chapter Three presents the research design for this study and the principles upon which this research design is based. Chapter Four provides the data analysis and interpretations of the data. Chapter Five presents the summary, discussion and

implications of the results of this study, including questions for further future research.

Significance of the Study

This study provides an account of the initial implementation phase of the International Spanish Academy in Edmonton Public Schools. It offers both the technical information and the human perspectives of this event. It also provides a description of the nature of this type of bilingual program in Canada, and the experiences of key individuals closely involved in its initiation. This study provides detailed information that will allow for future comparison, theory building, hypothesizing or theory testing.

The establishment of this program is of local, provincial, national and international interest, in the fields of research in bilingual and second language programming, as well as in the area of alternative programming. No research currently exists in the area of International Spanish Academies. Very little research has been conducted in the Canadian forms of international or heritage language bilingual program models that have existed for over 25 years in western Canada. This study contributes to the understanding of both the nature of this unique, emerging program, and provides insights into the nature of heritage language bilingual programs in Canada. It provides foundational data upon which future theory and hypothesis can be developed, and future complementary research can be enacted. This study also provides insights into the perceptions, experiences and perspectives of the key participants in the establishment of such a program.

As a result of this work, there are implications for the staff members involved, as they are provided with new perspectives and information to reflect upon as they progress through the future implementation phases of the program. Other staff facing the

establishment of new programs may benefit from the results of this study, whether they are in the field of second language or bilingual programming, mainstream programming, or alternative programming. This study holds implications for school administrators, school jurisdictions and provincial educational bodies (i.e. ministries of learning) who initiate new programs and/or plan for the support of new programs, especially second language programs, alternative programs, or other unique or innovative programs.

Students currently within the International Spanish Academy, as well as future students, may be positively impacted, as elements of their lived experiences have been documented and examined. As the events and experiences involving a parent have been a part of this study, future parents and community members might also draw further information and insights from the documentation of the processes and experiences that have been captured within the pages of this document.

Additionally, the initiation of this program is of historical significance for the staff, students, parents, community, school district, Alberta Learning and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain. The documentation of the onset of this International Spanish Academy will provide an invaluable tool for the preservation of a historical account of this important first year.

CHAPTER TWO:

RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

Examining the establishment of the International Spanish Academy requires a clear understanding of the various elements and processes that interacted to result in the emergence of this new, unique form of bilingual education. Bilingual education around the world exists in many forms and with varying structures and purposes (Baker, 2001). In the United States, for example, Spanish bilingual education exists within vastly different contexts and with very different aims than those of the new International Spanish Academies in Alberta. An understanding of this new form of bilingual programming and both its theoretical and practical foundations will provide clarity and context to this study. As these International Spanish Academies emerged from and are set within a unique context, and have been established for a specific set of purposes and goals, it is essential that their structure, purpose, vision and experience be illuminated. An exploration of the theoretical and practical underpinnings supporting the selection of this specific programming model is essential to providing a rich interpretation of this event.

To that end, understanding the establishment of the International Spanish Academies entails examining the reasons for providing second language and bilingual programming as an alternative program of choice, especially within a public education setting; understanding bilingual education and its models; exploring bilingual education in the world, Canada, Alberta, and the school district in which this model was established; understanding the emerging contexts for this form of education in the province and the related key events leading to their establishment. An understanding of

these elements, blended together, will provide a rich portrait from which this new program emerged.

Bilingual Education Overview

The effects of bilingual education on its students have been the interest of researchers for decades, especially for the identification of its benefits or its detrimental effects. There have been many findings that point to bilingualism as beneficial, such as research demonstrating positive impacts on the development of stronger intellectual abilities in children. Lambert and Peal (1962; Baker & Prys-Jones, 1998), for example, found that "balanced bilingual" children performed better on measures of verbal and non-verbal intelligence than children who spoke only one language. Hakuta (1990) states that

> bilingualism is associated positively with greater cognitive flexibility and awareness of language. Comparisons of bilingual and monolingual children, as well as comparisons of bilingual children of varying levels of development, indicate that bilingualism can lead to superior performance on a variety of intellectual skills. (p. 6)

Baker and Prys-Jones (1998) concur that in their review of research in this area from many countries in the world,

> most research findings show that bilinguals are superior to monolinguals on their creative or divergent thinking. Such superiority is found particularly among bilinguals whose two languages are both reasonably well developed. Where there is proficiency to a reasonable level in both languages (so-called balanced bilinguals), fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration in thinking appear to have a higher probability of occurring. (p. 67)

In terms of academic achievement, Krashen (1991) reported finding that "students in well-designed bilingual programs consistently outperformed comparison students, and did very well compared to local and national norms" (p.4). In a recent study by Turnbull, Lapkin and Hart (2001), the performance in mathematics and literacy achievement examinations in students in immersion programs in Ontario confirmed again the many earlier studies which found that

> at Grade 6, immersion students' literacy test scores were notably better than their peers in the English programs, and, at both Grade 3 and 6, the immersion students' mathematics test scores were almost identical to those of their peers in the English program, even though they had taken mathematics in French from, in most cases, Grades 1-3. (p. 23)

The impact of second language acquisition on a student's first language is also an important consideration. In his synthesis of reading research on bilingual students, Ramirez (2000), concludes that

> in sum, bilingualism is an opportunity, not an obstacle to literacy. Bilingualism not only does not appear to be an obstacle to literacy development in either language, but also seems to provide the learner with heightened skills necessary for literacy. (p. 30)

Similarly, in their Executive Summary of the Report of Current Research on the Effect of the Second Language Learning on First Language Literacy Skills, Bournot-Trites and Tallowitz (2002) conclude, "the effect of learning a second language (e.g., French) on first language skills has been virtually positive in all studies" (p. 3). These are just samples of a vast amount of research into the impact of second language learning on

students, most of which report positive impacts in areas such as academic achievement, creativity, communicative sensitivity, and divergent thinking. The benefits of this form of bilingual education are important to establish, as this provides the inspiration for such a program as the International Spanish Academy to become established, provides the incentive for students to choose to attend, and supports parents in their choice to entrust their children's education to this alternative form of programming.

Bilingual Education in the World

Bilingual education around the world in one form or another has existed for a very long time, even as far back as ancient times (Lessow-Hurley, 2000). However, establishing a clear and widely acceptable definition of what actually constitutes bilingual education is challenging. There are multiple definitions of bilingual education in use throughout the world (Baker, 2001), and the definitions reflect a range of contexts, practices and interpretations. In fact, de Meja (2002) states that "any attempt to provide 'hard and fast' definitions of concepts such as bilingualism and bilingual education seems doomed to failure, especially if we take into account the fact that this field is highly interdisciplinary" (p. 32). However, at a simple level, bilingualism has been defined as "the use of at least two languages either by an individual …or by a group of speakers, such as the inhabitants of a particular region or nation" (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992, p. 36); similarly, bilingual education can be defined as "the use of a second or foreign language in school for the teaching of content subjects" (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992, p. 36). The *Bilingual Framework* (GAMS, 1999) also offers a useful definition of bilingual education that relates strongly to the western Canadian context and specifically to the International Spanish Academies, and is useful for the purposes of this study:

The term *bilingual programming* is used to describe a partial immersion program where English and a second language are both languages of instruction. In bilingual programming, language arts is taught using both languages of instruction. Other subjects are taught either in English or the specific international language. Cultural knowledge, skills and attitudes are often taught using an integrated approach.

The instructional time spent in the specific international language varies from province to province and, sometimes, from program to program. The *Framework* presupposes that the following portions of the instructional day are allocated to instruction in the international language:

- Kindergarten to Grade 6 – 50%
- Grade 7 to Grade 9 – 30%
- Grade 10 to Grade 12 – 20%. (p. vii)

The above definition provided the original foundation for the development of the International Spanish Academies, and provides a starting point for the comparison of the International Spanish Academy model to other models of bilingual education available in the world.

Bilingual education exists in various regions of the world; many different forms of bilingual education can be found with varying structures and varying aims (Baker, 2001; Lessow-Hurley, 2000). Baker (2001) provides one useful summary and categorization of the dominant models, presented in Table 1 (pp. 13-14).

Table 1

WEAK FORMS OF EDUCATION FOR BILINGUALISM				
Type of Program	**Typical Type of Child**	**Language of the Classroom**	**Societal and Educational Aim**	**Aim in Language Outcome**
SUBMERSION (Structured Immersion)	Language Minority	Majority Language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
SUBMERSION With Withdrawal Classes/Sheltered English	Language Minority	Majority Language with 'Pull-out' L2 Lessons	Assimilation	Monolingualism
SEGREGATIONIST	Language Minority	Minority Language (forced, no choice)	Apartheid	Monolingualism
TRANSITIONAL	Language Minority	Moves from Minority to Majority Language	Assimilation	Relative Monolingualism
MAINSTREAM with Foreign Language Teaching	Language Majority	Majority Language with L2/FL Lessons	Limited Enrichment	Limited Bilingualism
SEPARATIST	Language Minority	Minority Language (out of choice)	Detachment/autonomy	Limited Bilingualism
STRONG FORMS OF EDUCATION FOR BILINGUALISM AND BILITERACY				
Type of Program	**Typical Type of Child**	**Language of the Classroom**	**Societal and Educational Aim**	**Aim in Language Outcome**
IMMERSION	Language Majority	Bilingual with Initial Emphasis on L2	Pluralism and Enrichment	Bilingualism & Biliteracy
MAINTENANCE/HERITAGE LANGUAGE	Language Minority	Bilingual with Emphasis on L1	Maintenance, Pluralism and Enrichment	Bilingualism & Biliteracy
TWO-WAY/DUAL LANGUAGE	Mixed Language	Minority and	Maintenance, Pluralism and	Bilingualism & Biliteracy

	Minority & Majority	Majority	Enrichment	
MAINSTREAM BILINGUAL	Language Majority	Two Majority Languages	Maintenance, Pluralism and Enrichment	Bilingualism & Biliteracy

Notes: (1) L2 = Second Language; L1 = First Language; FL = Foreign Language.
(2) Formulation of this table owes much to discussions with Professor Ofelia Garcia. This typology is extended to 14 types of bilingual education in Garcia (1997, p. 410).

In this table, the "weak" forms of education for bilingualism are listed first, then strong forms of education for bilingualism and biliteracy are provided last. To briefly review each category in the table, Submersion and Transitional types of bilingual programs aim to develop in students their proficiency in the majority language (that is, the dominant language of that society), and to reduce the students' development or need for their native (usually minority) language. Segregationist and Separatist forms result in the separation of minority language speakers from the majority language speakers, for differing purposes. Mainstream education, which is a predominant model used in Canada, provides for a small amount of second language education to majority language speakers; in the western Canadian context, this describes the current context in which many predominantly English speakers study a small amount of another language in the school system.

In terms of the strong forms of education for bilingualism and biliteracy, the Immersion program model is well-known internationally for the positive results that were initially achieved in Canada in the French Immersion programs, in which predominantly English speaking students were provided programming in which they became "immersed" in French. This model has been adopted in many areas of the world in various languages. The Maintenance/Heritage Language program describes various

contexts, including the original contexts in western Canada in which bilingual programs were established in languages such as Ukrainian and German to support the linguistic and cultural maintenance of children from local heritage language communities. The Two-Way/Dual Language occur when there are approximately equal numbers of majority language and minority language students in the same classroom, and the goal is to develop language proficiency in both languages in all of the students. That model has been developed in many areas of the United States, for example. Finally, the Mainstream Bilingual programs are those in which there already exist two mainstream languages in the society; the goals are usually to develop both languages equally in the students.

As can be seen Table 1, the main types of bilingual education worldwide are many and varied, with diverse structures, goals and clientele. It is very important at the outset of this study to clarify the form of Spanish bilingual education being established through this International Spanish Academy in Edmonton Public Schools. The program models used in western Canada are relatively unique, frequently misrepresented and frequently misunderstood even in current literature on bilingual education. As well, other forms of Spanish bilingual education have received much attention in the popular and academic literature. Therefore the intent of this western Canadian model bears clarification.

Following the categories provided in Table 1, the International Spanish Academies have as their intent the immersion style program, yet the maximum amount of time allowed through provincial policy (Alberta Learning, 2003b) only permits the students to be immersed for 50% of the time in the majority language, and 50% of the time in the Spanish language. The majority language in Alberta is English; the program

vision includes meeting the needs of students both from this majority language, as well as students who might have a cultural or heritage connection to the Spanish language, or even students who have no history with neither Spanish nor English. Such is the context in this program as it is established as an alternative program within the public school system in Alberta. The languages of the classroom are assumed to be Spanish during Spanish instructional time and English during English instructional time. The goals of the program (Alberta Learning, 2002c) include language proficiency in both languages; cultural skills, knowledge and attitudes relative to Spanish-speaking cultures of the world and also one's own personal cultural awareness and identities; and the development of global citizenship skills such as valuing of similarity and differences, intercultural skill development, etc. The societal and educational aims are definitely maintenance, pluralism and enrichment. As well, bilingualism and biliteracy are definitely the aims in terms of the overall language outcomes. In these ways, this program represents an interesting new bilingual programming model for further exploration and study.

Bilingual Education in Canada

In Canada, authority for education is delegated to the provinces and territories, and as a result, language education varies from province to province. However, the existence of federal legislation regarding such areas as the official languages, multiculturalism, and minority language rights indirectly influences provincial language education policies and practices (Frideres, 1998).

One such key influence was the establishment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 (McRae, 1998) and its ensuing report, which resulted in the Parliament of Canada adopting the first Official Languages Act

(Government of Canada, 2003). This Act was first adopted in 1969 (Government of Canada, 2003) then revised in 1988 (Government of Canada, 1988b). The current Official Languages Act (Government of Canada, 1988b) identifies that the three main goals of the Government of Canada are to:

- ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions, in particular with respect to their use in parliamentary proceedings, in legislative and other instruments, in the administration of justice, in communicating with or providing services to the public and in carrying out the work of federal institutions;
- support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities and generally advance the equality of status and use of the English and French languages within Canadian society; and
- set out the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions with respect to the official languages of Canada. (p. 2)

Through such legislation, the federal government exerted a significant amount of influence in the area of French and English language rights and provisions, and drew attention to the importance of official bilingualism. As a result, societal awareness and interest in second language education and bilingual education was augmented, creating a context for further models of language education to be considered.

Other federal legislation that has had a significant impact on the advent of bilingual programs in Canada includes the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and

the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Frideres, 1998). As is also outlined in Section 16 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, "English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada" (Government of Canada, 1982, p. 4). As well, Section 27 of the Charter states, "this Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians" (p. 6). The Canadian Multiculturalism Act that was originally legislated in 1985 and amended in 1988 is "An Act for the preservation and enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada" (Government of Canada, 1988, p. 1). This Act provided a foundation for a range of ethnic and cultural groups to focus on their own cultural and linguistic strengthening.

With such mounting importance at the federal level on official bilingualism in the 1960's and this continuing movement and momentum continuing on through the 1980's, as well as an importance placed in federal legislation on multiculturalism, new forms of language education began to emerge during this period in time. For example, within the field of bilingual education, Canada received much world attention and acclaim for its French immersion program model, which was initially introduced in an elementary school in St. Lambert, Quebec in 1965 (de Meja, 2002; Baker, 2001). Since 1965, French immersion programs have become established and still thrive in many regions across the country. As well, bilingual heritage language programming in languages other than French began to emerge and thrive, to meet the initial needs of the local heritage language and cultural groups. These were the program models upon which the International Spanish Academy was eventually developed.

Bilingual Education in Alberta

In the local provincial context, many factors were involved over an entire century that resulted in the development of the bilingual programming model for language programs upon which the International Spanish Academy was based. In 1901, prior to Alberta becoming a province, territorial legislation was passed allowing for instruction in languages other than English. A model of bilingual education in French and other languages that had been developed in Manitoba, along with this new legislation, provided a foundation for bilingual education to come into being in Alberta. "Although there was no legislative provision for bilingual education in Alberta, the Manitoba model and the 1901 provision for 'other language' instruction inspired a movement in Alberta to establish bilingual schools" (Alberta Learning, 1997, p. 22). However, this movement was halted for a period of time in 1913, when bilingual education was banned completely, and instruction in other languages was restricted to after school instruction only.

However, this 1901 legislation continued to be the basis upon which mother tongue instruction in languages other than English was allowed to continue for decades into the future. In the 1960s, however, a series of new changes, over time, in the School Act were made to support French language instruction (Frideres, 1998). Following suit in 1971, after much work and lobbying by key organizations within the Ukrainian community, provisions were made for school boards to provide up to 50% of instructional time in a language other than English. A pilot project for the establishment of Ukrainian bilingual programs in the two Edmonton public school boards was initiated (Dawson, 1985, p.241). "Alberta was the first province to enact such legislation, but

Manitoba and Saskatchewan soon followed. Pursuant to this legislation, a pilot Ukrainian Bilingual Program was initiated in 1974." (Alberta Learning, 1997, p. 23). This Ukrainian bilingual program became the first bilingual program in Alberta. Three years later, "in the fall of 1977 the Ukrainian bilingual programme ceased to be a pilot project and was permanently extended into [further grades]" (Dawson, 1985, p. 241). Over the next decades, bilingual programs were established in Alberta within some of the public and separate school systems, in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hebrew, and Polish. Historically, these programs were all initially established as heritage language programs, with goals of language and cultural maintenance. However, recent shifts in the political, economic and social contexts have impacted these programs, resulting in a shift at the program and curriculum level toward a balance of heritage maintenance and the development of skills to foster global citizenship and international perspectives.

In their current forms, this blend of program goals provides an interesting model for further analysis. Although Baker (2001) still typically categorizes these bilingual program models used in Alberta as developmental maintenance and heritage language bilingual education, his description no longer accurately reflects the current situation in these programs; the real programming models are actually much more complex than that description implies. For example, many students in Alberta's bilingual programs no longer come from homes in which the language other than English being learned at school is used as the primary language of communication in the home. For some students with a heritage link to the language, the use of the heritage language at home has often diminished significantly, even to the point where the students' parents themselves may

not be fluent speakers of the language. Other students in these same programs, however, are recent immigrants with high levels of previous exposure, proficiency and even literacy in the language. Additionally, an increasing number of students are entering these programs with no heritage connection to the language program and no previous exposure to the language, but are instead motivated by other factors. Many other variations in the types of students enrolled in these programs exist. In these public education systems, however, all students, regardless of previous exposure to the language or a heritage connection, are invited and accepted into these programs.

However, as many students entering bilingual programs in Alberta arrive into the programs with little or no previous exposure to the heritage language, the curricula for all of the bilingual international language programs in Alberta and Manitoba are designed for students who have had no previous exposure to the heritage language upon entry into the program at Kindergarten or Grade 1 (GAMS, 1999). The current bilingual programming model used in Alberta for international languages does maintain some elements of the heritage language bilingual education, in that the intent or motivation for many parents, but certainly not all, to put their children into such programs is heritage language and culture development or maintenance. However, in terms of most other characteristics of intent and program delivery model, the bilingual international language programs in Alberta reflect the intent and many of the characteristics of the immersion model described by Baker (2001) in that the typical child most often speaks the majority language (English) as a first language, the classroom is bilingual, the societal and educational aims are pluralism and enrichment, and bilingualism and biliteracy are the

aims in terms of the language outcomes. The amount of time spent in the target language, however, is significantly more in the true immersion model.

As was mentioned earlier, the bilingual programming model for international languages in Alberta is controlled to an extent by policies established both by Alberta Learning and the local school jurisdictions. Alberta Learning Policy 1.5.3 Languages Other Than French or English (Alberta Learning, 1998) states that "a board may authorize the use of French or any other language as a language of instruction" (p. 1), and defines bilingual programming: " 'partial immersion (bilingual) program' means a program in which a language other than English or French is used as the language of instruction, to a maximum of 50 per cent of the instructional day" (p. 2). All of the international languages that are delivered through a bilingual program model in Alberta have English as the language of instruction for at least 50% of the school day, and the international language as the language of instruction for the remaining 30% to 50% of the school day (GAMS, 1999). The Alberta Learning policy is the initial guiding policy in determining the instructional time.

Bilingual Education in Edmonton Public Schools

Edmonton Public Schools has a rich history of immersion and bilingual programming. It currently offers second language programs of various models and entry points in ten languages: Arabic, ASL (American Sign Language), Chinese (Mandarin), English, French, German, Hebrew, Japanese, Spanish and Ukrainian. This school district has offered French Immersion programming for many decades. Since the start of its Ukrainian-English Bilingual Program in 1974, it has expanded its bilingual programs to

include German, Arabic, Hebrew, ASL (American Sign Language), Chinese (Mandarin), and now the International Spanish Academy.

The Edmonton Public Schools policy that governs bilingual programming, Policy HA.BP, states that "the board supports the continued offering of French Immersion and Awasis and of the following bilingual programs: American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hebrew, and Ukrainian." (Edmonton Public Schools, 2001, p. 2). In this school jurisdiction, the bilingual international language programs are treated as alternative programs; alignment with provincial policies exists. Of note is the fact that the policy has not yet been updated to reflect the addition of the International Spanish Academy, and that specific time allocations for the languages of instruction are not included.

Edmonton Public Schools is a school district known for its wide range of alternative programs. This support for alternative programs has its roots in its bilingual programs, as the bilingual programs were the district's first alternative programs. Their success paved the way for future alternative programming in a wide range of areas, such as the fine arts and sports. To become established as a new alternative program, the school district considers many factors, such as the projected need and demand from members of the public for such a program, its academic value, potential staffing requirements and potential locations. Interest and support from the provincial government and the government of Spain, as well as several factors such as projected need and demand from the public for such a program, all enabled the establishment of the International Spanish Academy at Escuela Mill Creek School in Edmonton Public Schools.

A Changing Context for Second Language and Bilingual Education

Beginning in the late 1980s and into the 1990s, a current of change was beginning to occur in many regions of the world relative to second language and bilingual programming. For example, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) was under development to guide language education throughout the eleven member countries of the European Union. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages collaborated with other key language groups in the United States to create a new standards document to guide further program development (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996). The Australian Government developed a new language policy and guidelines (Scarino A., Vale D., McKay P, and J. Clark, 1988). In western Canada, the development of the *Bilingual Framework* (GAMS, 1999) reflected a shift in the purposes, needs and thought relative to bilingual programming in western Canada.

Other economic and political factors in Alberta, such as demographic changes, business trends, an increase in world travel and globalization, and new trade agreements and interests, brought attention to the importance of international language education. During the same period, a shift in political will in the Alberta Government was beginning to occur, due to a growing realization of the economic advantages in having a population that could speak English and additional international languages.

The Minister of Learning himself, Dr. Lyle Oberg, was very much attentive to this growing trend. In 2000, the Second Language Enhancement Project was initiated by his ministry to improve second language learning in the province (Alberta Learning, 2003a). As well, Alberta Learning (2001), in its own international education strategy, identified

as its first objective that "Albertans will have increased opportunities to develop better understanding of global economic, political, and social systems; to develop relevant global competencies, including second language skills; and to participate in international learning opportunities" (p. 4). Also for 2001, Alberta Learning's Business Plan (Government of Alberta, 2000) included strategies relative to second language education, to "increase the proportion of students taking a second language from 25% to 33%" (Alberta Learning, 2002b, p. 1). This focused attempt by the government to increase the number of students developing proficiency in a second language is a direct result of the decrease in enrolments in second language programs at the high school level, especially in French language courses. It is also very indicative of the growing importance being placed on second language education in the province, especially for economic reasons.

More specifically to Spanish, many trends in the 1990s supported the perception of the economic importance of the Spanish language. The signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of the United States of America, 1983), the trend of growing importance of Spanish language in the United States, the emergence of Spanish-speaking figures in popular culture and significant increases in enrolments in Spanish language courses in the province both in basic education and by adult learners, all contributed to the heightened awareness and interest in this language. Of great significance in this study of the onset of the International Spanish Academy in Canada was that in 1998, the Ministry of Education of the Government of Alberta and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain signed a memorandum of understanding (Alberta Learning, 1998a). One key element of the memorandum was the agreement by the Government of Spain to place

a consultant in the province to work in support of Spanish language education, which resulted in a stronger presence, stronger focus, increased human resources, and increased motivation to support Spanish language education in Alberta. So, this developing world and provincial context in the late 1990s was very important to the establishment of the International Spanish Academies.

The Establishment of the International Spanish Academies

Perceptive of these new shifts, several central administrators at Edmonton Public Schools began discussions with the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain regarding the possible establishment of the new International Spanish Academies, as a means of increasing the Spanish language development opportunities and meeting the diverse needs and interests of students in the school districts. Subsequently, although Edmonton Public Schools had not established a new bilingual program for decades, a report was developed and submitted to the Board of Trustees to initiate a feasibility study to investigate the potential for establishing such a program (Edmonton Public Schools, 2000a). This report was accepted (Edmonton Public Schools, 2000b) and the study was initiated. Also in 2000, representatives from Edmonton Public Schools, Calgary Board of Education, University of Calgary, Alberta Learning and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain collaborated to develop a draft Spanish Language Arts Program of Studies, which would form the basis for Spanish language instruction for the International Spanish Academies (Edmonton Public Schools, 2000a, 2000b). The initial feasibility study followed, resulting in a recommendation being presented to the Board of Trustees that the International Spanish Academy be established (Edmonton Public Schools, 2001a). This recommendation was accepted (Edmonton Public Schools, 2001c)

and the establishment of the International Spanish Academy was therefore formally approved.

The model that was presented to the Board of Trustees represented a change in bilingual programming at Edmonton Public Schools from several perspectives. Remarkably, this program represented the first bilingual program at Edmonton Public Schools that was initiated not by the concerted request of parent groups or community groups, but instead was initiated by central administrative staff, with collaborative efforts of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain and Alberta Learning.

Second, this International Spanish Academy was specifically established to meet the needs not only of students who might have a heritage connection to a Spanish-speaking culture, but also to meet the needs of students of any language and cultural heritage who might wish to learn Spanish and English in an intensive program.

Third, the International Spanish Academy represented the first bilingual program at Edmonton Public Schools to have been initiated through an international agreement, with the support of a foreign government and the involvement of representatives of that government.

Fourth, the program model developed and used for the establishment of the International Spanish Academy included some new elements that had not been included in previous bilingual programs. For example, the existing bilingual programs had traditionally implemented Social Studies as one of the main content areas taught in the target second language. However, in the foundation of the structure of the International Spanish Academy in Edmonton Public Schools, the central staff determined that

Mathematics would be a subject area delivered in Spanish. As well, the anticipated presence of the Spanish consultant provided to the province by the government of Spain, and the support, new initiatives and continuing close partnership with Spain that were anticipated to be a result of her presence, added an additional international dimension to the program structure and vision.

Therefore, in the case of the International Spanish Academy in Edmonton Public Schools, the bilingual international language program model chosen was similar in basic structure to the other previously-established programs in that school jurisdiction, and followed provincial and local policies regarding time and languages of instruction. However, the International Spanish Academy varied significantly in several areas.

Bilingual Program Establishment

In the United States, there exists a large quantity of research and writings in the area of Spanish bilingual education. This research has mainly been focused on the "weaker forms" of bilingual education that have been established, which frequently have as societal aims the assimilation of Spanish-speaking students into mainstream English-speaking societies. As well, very little research exists regarding the maintenance or heritage language bilingual programs, and research regarding the establishment of such bilingual programs such as the model used for the International Spanish Academy is even more rare.

Montague (1997) ventures into this area of the establishment of bilingual programs. Although based on the highly politicized models of two-way Spanish-English bilingual programs in the United States, her discussion of the critical elements for dual

language programs provides some insights. Montague identifies seven components that are

> critical to success in dual language programs; these include: (a) definition of the model to be used; (b) a gradual phase-in of the model; (c) development of instruction that reflects the population in the classroom; (d) quality materials in each language of instruction; (e) teachers committed to attaining bilingual education training; (f) dedicated administrators with a clear understanding of research as well as the community needs; and (g) definition of the role of elicited response. (p. 334)

This model seemed to be a useful framework for the documentation of the establishment of a new dual language school in Texas (Montague, Marroquin and Lucido, 2001). For that study, the set of seven critical components provided a useful tool for commentary on the elements that were or were not in place for that program's inception. This set of critical components does not appear, however, to have been thoroughly researched and confirmed as a comprehensive framework for broader applications to the field. Yet, it does provide some elements that assist to inform this case study of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy.

Howard and Sugarman (2001) also provide an overview of key characteristics of the two-way immersion programs that have been established in the United States. Among its defining characteristics are the program location, languages of instruction, program models, languages in which the initial literacy development will be provided, the racial/ethnic diversity of the students in the programs, the socioeconomic status of the students, and the staffing of the programs. Again based on the models from the United

States which have some distinctly different characteristics than that of the International Spanish Academy, this set of descriptors provides another perspective of the potential considerations for the establishment of new bilingual programs.

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs sponsored the Intercultural Development Research Association to conduct a study of successful bilingual education programs in the United States (Montecel & Cortez, 2002). Although again, the models and purposes of the programs were not entirely consistent with those of the International Spanish Academies, the results of this study can assist in understanding elements that are necessary for such programs to succeed. This study identified twenty-five common characteristics that contributed to the success (defined by high academic performance) of these students. These include specific characteristics in areas such as school leadership (for example, "total and unwavering commitment to their students' achievement and to an excellent bilingual education program that was fully integrated into the school", (Montecel & Cortez, 2002, p. 9), school climate (for example, "all of the schools affirmed and valued racial and cultural differences", p. 11), parental involvement and professional development. This study provides additional useful insights into desirable elements to seek or foster when establishing such programs.

Of note as well is a set of "common pitfalls" defined by Curtain and Pesola (2000) relative to the establishment of early years' second language programs. Although these were designed to inform a different program type, several of the pitfalls confirm the concerns of the previously identified authors. For example, these authors identify the necessity of hiring teachers with language proficiency and teaching skills suited to the

program. They also stress the importance of phasing in the new programs. They also address such areas as the selection of the target language, program articulation from elementary to secondary school levels, and scheduling. Again, although the elements identified are informative, the intended program for which these recommendations are made does not fit that of the International Spanish Academy.

These factors contribute to the importance of this case study as establishing a foundation for future investigation and theorizing about this new program type. The research into the establishment of this specific type of bilingual program is significantly lacking. There exists no systematic, quality research into this area, and the available literature is inadequate in this area. This supports the importance of this study in establishing an initial body of research into this form of Spanish bilingual programming.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

Overview

This study seeks to document, examine and illuminate the experiences and perceptions of key participants in the establishment of the first International Spanish Academy in Canada. It strives to provide a rich, multi-faceted description of the various aspects of the initial phase of this new and unique program. To that end, qualitative research methods have been selected as the most enabling methods. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) describe qualitative research as follows:

> Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 2)

As the researcher is intensely interested in the sequence of events that are occurring throughout this program establishment and, more importantly, the experiences and perceptions of those involved and impacted directly by those events, qualitative research methods have been chosen as the most effective approach for this study.

Within the paradigms of qualitative research, this study blends elements of descriptive, narrative and interpretive research. The documentation of this phenomenon of the establishment of the first International Spanish Academy in Canada, including the historical and contextual examination as well as the descriptive accounts of the study participants, reveals the strong influence of the descriptive paradigm. As described by Merriam (1988), "*descriptive research* is undertaken when description and explanation

(rather than prediction based on cause and effect) are sought…the aim of descriptive research is to examine events or phenomena" (p. 7). This study seeks to provide a richly descriptive account of the establishment of this new program. Concurrently, the narrative elements remain very strong in this study; this study draws its strength from narrative inquiry, through experiences as told by the study participants and retold throughout the process of the negotiations of meaning between the researcher and the participants, as well as through the process of the data analysis and interpretation. As stated by Connelly and Clandinin, (1990), "narrative inquiry is a process of collaboration involving mutual storytelling and restorying as the research proceeds" (p. 4). The storytelling and restorying throughout this study was a strong component of the research methodology. Finally, the elements of the interpretive paradigm were also very present throughout this study, as the study itself attempted to illuminate some perceived commonalities found throughout the data, and to elaborate on some of the emerging themes and concepts. Peshkin (1993) describes interpretation in qualitative research as containing "the nonexhaustive subcategories of good research outcomes that *explain or create generalizations, develop new concepts, elaborate existing concepts, provide insights, clarify complexity,* and *develop theory"* (p. 25). Many of these subcategories parallel the goals of this study.

It was determined that the examination of the onset of this program through the collection of a variety of perspectives and interpretations of the experiences occurring within is most effectively attained through case study methodologies. As a limited and bounded event, the establishment of the first International Spanish Academy in Canada lends itself well to case study research. Merriam (1988) describes case study as " an

intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). She later also states that "a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (1998, p. 19), which strongly supports the intent of this research. Yin (1994) states, "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its re-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). MacNealy (1999) states that empirical researchers use the term case study to refer to

> a carefully designed project to systematically collect information about an event, situation, or small group of persons or objects for the purpose of exploring, describing, and/or explaining new aspects not previously known or considered. The purpose is to develop new insights, new knowledge. (p. 197)

The documentation and examination of both the events involved in the opening of the International Spanish Academy and the human experiences and perceptions that are embedded within this context match well with the intent and purposes of case study research.

There are considerable advantages to the use of case study research in this particular study. MacNealy (1999), for example, sets out four elements which case study research can help provide: "a *holistic* view of an event or situation; *rich detail* that can lead to a better understanding of an event or situation; *information that can not otherwise be collected; a more precise definition of research questions*" (p. 199). These elements were sought in the planning for the study of the onset of the International Spanish Academy.

It is also important to recognize in advance the disadvantages of the use of case study research. For example, case study research has historically been regarded as unscientific and limited in its generalizability (MacNealy, 1999; Peshkin, 1993). To counteract or minimize the effects of these criticisms, MacNealy (1999, p. 200) recommends eight practices for "increasing the respectability of a case study", which were considered and incorporated as much as possible into this case study of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy. MacNealy's (1999) eight practices are as follows:

- Define the problem that needs attention
- Select the subject(s) to be studied with care
- Plan and test procedures in advance of data collection
- Be systematic about data collection
- Collect data that can be examined by others to allow verification of findings
- Use triangulation so that more than one measure will converge on an issue
- Verify conclusions by asking an outside rater to examine the collected materials
- Present conclusions as tentative (p. 200-202)

The study design that follows seeks to address these eight practices in a methodical, pre-planned manner.

Study Design

This case study of the opening of the International Spanish Academy emerged as a result of a very real problem facing the researcher in her professional life. As Consultant for International Languages at Edmonton Public Schools, part of the researcher's assignment was to assist in the actual day-to-day planning for the opening of this program. However, as this program had been newly conceptualized, did not yet exist anywhere in the world, and little documentation of similar program establishment was available, there was little information available to assist in this endeavor. Therefore the working problem at that time was to predict or envision that for which preparation was needed; what events would possibly occur; and most importantly, how those future events would impact or be perceived by the program's future stakeholders, namely the students, staff, administration, parents, and community. The research and documentation of the establishment of this or similar programs was severely lacking.

As a result of this experience and the identified need for research in this area, this researcher undertook to initiate a case study of the opening of the International Spanish Academy.

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does the International Spanish Academy move from a theoretical program to an enacted program? What occurs?
- What is the experience of students, staff, administrators, and parents, as they pioneer the implementation of this new program?

The design of this case study included a set of interviews of key participants in the onset of the International Spanish Academy. The study sample was as follows:

- the school principal
- the kindergarten Spanish teacher
- the grade one/two Spanish teacher
- the English kindergarten teacher
- a parent
- a student

Due to the fact that there was only one school principal significantly involved in the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, that school administrator was chosen as a key participant to be interviewed. There were two Spanish-speaking teachers hired to teach in the new International Spanish Academy, so both of these teachers were invited and agreed to be interview subjects. One teacher from the existing English program within the school location was also selected.

To begin this process of selection of the parent and student study participants, the school principal invited a small group of parents to attend a brief meeting, during which they were introduced to the purpose and procedures of the study. The parents then were invited by the researcher and the school administrator to consider participating in this study, and/or to consider allowing their children to participate. Those parents who were agreeable to proceeding further were asked to indicate such to the researcher by returning the prepared consent forms back to the researcher. The parents and students who submitted forms to the researcher were then initially invited to be interviewed. Due to the large quantity of data generated by this original set of interviews, the number of study participants were further reduced, for the purposes of this case study, to one parent

participant and one student participant. The selection of the final student and parent participants was made based on the range of data they provided in the initial interviews.

The parent that was selected for this study held roles that are significant to illuminate in this study. The parent is the mother of the student that participated in this study. She is also the Chair of the School Council for Escuela Mill Creek School, which is a parent advisory body to the school. She is also a non-speaker of Spanish, having no heritage connection to the Spanish language nor to Spanish-speaking cultures.

The student that was selected is the daughter of the parent participant, and also has no heritage connection to Spanish. At the time of this study, she was beginning grade two, and had had no significant previous exposure to the Spanish language in advance of entering the International Spanish Academy. Her previous schooling had been in the regular English programming at Mill Creek School.

Each subject participated in two interviews through the course of this study. The first interview was held in the fall of the first year of the program, shortly after the opening of the program; the second interviews were conducted very close to the end of the first year of the program.

To gather the information and perspectives that would assist in responding to these questions, the semi-structured interview was selected as the main method for collecting data. This method served to gather a depth of information, perspectives and insights that other methods might not. The interviews were conducted with the individual subjects in a confidential, one-on-one context. The interviews were administered to the individual respondents either at the school site itself or, when preferred by the participants, in the home of the participants.The interviews were semi-structured, with a

pre-established series of questions (included in Appendix A) that assisted to ensure a certain amount of consistency. The interview questions were designed to elicit the participants' experiences and perspectives of the onset of the International Spanish Academy. Several variations of these questions, however, were designed to accommodate the varying ages and roles of interview candidates. During the planning for the semi-structured interviews, flexibility was incorporated to support more full development of the respondent's answers, such as the probing for more information, follow-up questions, etc. The semi-structured interviews were recorded onto audiocassettes, transcribed and then analyzed.

In a minimal way, a limited amount of document analysis was also conducted. This method assisted in establishing the historical and contemporary contexts within which the study participants are set and from which the program is emerging. It also contributed further information about initial vision and framework for the International Spanish Academies. Documents, such as early declarations of the intent of the International Spanish Academies and reports documenting the approval of the program format and other key elements, all provided information and perspectives about the emerging International Spanish Academy at various points in time. However, these documents provided only peripheral and supportive information that assisted in establishing the contexts; the interviews themselves formed the foundation and heart of this study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Due to the multitude of interviews and the resulting quantity of empirical materials that were generated throughout this study, the management of data and the resulting interpretations posed significant challenges.

Following the transcription of the numerous interviews and the gathering of documents, careful analysis was made of the data. Initially, a chronological examination of the key events and the experiences of the participants within those events were examined. In many cases, the same events were experienced by several of the subjects, thus providing opportunities for comparison and identification of consistencies and discrepancies. Next, the data was examined from the aspects of the key elements identified by most participants as essential elements in the construction of the program. Thirdly, the data was examined from the perspectives of the key stakeholder groups involved in the program establishment. And finally, the data was analyzed and coded according to significant and pervading themes that emerged throughout the interviews. The results of this analysis were woven into a descriptive and interpretive account that provides important insights into the experiences and events surrounding the establishment of the new International Spanish Academy.

Ethical Considerations

Several processes were included in the procedures of this study to ensure that this study was conducted in an ethical manner. In advance of the interviews with all study participants, the researcher met with each participant. The researcher provided full information about who she is, her role as a researcher, the nature and purpose of the

study, and the methods that would be used for gathering information. The researcher then provided a letter requesting participation. The letter clearly defined the expectations of the study and the intended use of the interview data. A consent form accompanied the letter, seeking permission to interview the study participants and to audiotape the interviews for transcription and for use in the thesis document development and publication. The consent form also clearly indicated that participants could withdraw from the research at any time without penalty. This component was clearly discussed with the potential participants. The researcher then invited the participants to consider the information provided, and provided ample opportunity for further contemplation, questions and discussion of the proposed study. In advance of their participation in this study, these letters were signed and submitted to the researcher by each participant. Of special note is that the young student in this study also received detailed explanation of the study process and the use of the interview results, in the company of her parent. Both the student and the parent signed and submitted the relevant permission forms.

As many of the research participants could potentially be recognizable, the researcher made significant attempts to ensure accurate and ethical representation of the study results by providing the study participants opportunities to review the study results and to provide feedback. This process ensured that the level of confidentiality achieved, and the representation of the study results were both fair and accurate. In addition, a clear boundary was maintained between the roles of the researcher; information and perspectives shared through the research process was strictly maintained within the confines of the study.

The Researcher

In qualitative research, each researcher brings to bear on the study her own unique combinations of purposes, perspectives, background, and influences. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), "every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community, which configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act" (p. 11). The researcher approached this study from a constructivist paradigm, believing that reality is uniquely experienced, constructed and interpreted. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) further describe, "the constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures" (pp. 13-14).

In this study, the researcher also has a unique role. The researcher has had an intensive history with and passion for the program. As employee of Edmonton Public Schools as International Languages Consultant responsible for bilingual program support, as consultant to the International Spanish Academy from its initial inception, and as a central office administrator who was involved in the background work to enable the program to be established, the researcher herself comes to this study from a distinct set of perspectives that will impact many aspects of the study, including its design, data collection, and the data interpretation. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state,

> qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-

laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning (p. 4)

Denzin and Lincoln's description summarizes the key elements of this researcher's role; the researcher seeks to discover and understand the multiple experiences and perspectives from within a shared experience with fellow colleagues and members of the school community, understanding that her own relationship will be a factor in the formulation and telling of this experience. This relationship will in many ways enrich the study, in that the study design, methods and data analysis will also be performed from an insider's viewpoint and will be strengthened by a deep understanding of the program.

Limitations and Biases

There are a number of limitations and biases that must be identified and considered. For example, it is assumed that the interview process used, inviting the study participants to share their memories and perceptions, resulted in reliable information, perceptions and representations of their lived experiences. These memories and perceptions were reported through the interview processes. This study acknowledges that it is difficult to look back on significant events and experiences and then to retell them with thoroughness and completeness; however, although the details provided may have been more generalizations of the lived experiences, the major events and the perceptions of the experiences were most likely described as they had been perceived, internalised and remembered by the study participants.

One of the major limitations of this study is the role and impact of the researcher herself. As an employee of Edmonton Public Schools, a consultant for International Languages, and a consultant involved in the establishment of the International Spanish

Academy, the researcher was privy to an extensive amount of detailed information throughout this process. As a colleague of the principal and teacher participants in this study, the researcher was bound not only by the ethics of research but also by the codes of professional conduct established and adhered to within the teaching profession. Additionally, the researcher holds a perceived position of power relative to the study participants, being in an administrative position in the central office of the school district involved. This position of power holds the potential of limiting or impacting the type of information and perspectives that the study participants may provide through the interview process. This position and perceived authority therefore holds the potential for significant influence on the results of this study.

The study is also limited by the researcher's interpretations of the events as reported by the study participants. The researcher, as a contributor in the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, also holds a position of bias toward the process of the program establishment. The analysis of events partially reflects the researcher's personal involvement with the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, and the researcher's assumptions and perspectives from that insider position. However, the combination of the large amount of data provided by the many study participants, the researcher's own involvement and background knowledge, and the available background documentation and literature results in a triangulated, multifaceted, and rich account of the establishment of the program.

Assumptions

It is crucial to recognize and reiterate some of the fundamental assumptions made at the outset of this case study. The constructivist paradigm and qualitative research

methodologies are fundamental to this study. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state, "objective reality can never be captured" (p. 2); "there is no single interpretive truth" (p. 15). This study strives simply to gather, document, and interpret a range of experiences and perspectives related to the establishment of the International Spanish Academy. It does not profess to establish "the truth", but instead offers perspectives and interpretations for consideration.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data that was gathered through this study is extensive and complex. It can be examined and re-examined from numerous perspectives, each perspective revealing new insights and new facets of the experience of establishing the International Spanish Academy. It is important, however, to begin with the elements of the data that assist us in understanding the sequence of events that establishes the context of this first year, and how the events within this context were experienced and perceived by the insider participants. After this context is established, an examination of the structural elements that emerged as having formed the foundation of the program provides a new set of insights into the essential underpinnings of the Spanish Academy. It is also important to analyze the establishment of the International Spanish Academy from the point of view of its impact and meaning to the key stakeholders. Finally, critical themes emerged from the data that reveal the fundamental common experiences of the establishment of this new program. All of these various perspectives combined provide a descriptive account of this important event in language education in Canada.

The Events and the Experiences Within

The essence of this study is to document and examine the events and experiences that occurred during the establishment of this unique new form of bilingual education in Canada. This will serve a variety of future purposes, especially in providing an information base from which future decision-makers can draw to effectively and successfully establish similar bilingual language or alternative programs.

Although a multitude of events of varying importance to the study participants occurred during this initial year, the focal events chosen for this study are as follows:

- selection of the program site;
- preparation for the program opening;
- first day of the program;
- the opening weeks;
- settling in…the daily routines and operations;
- special events;
- year end and planning for year two.

These categories were based on the frequency of their occurrence in the data, and the perceived importance to the study participants.

As the study relies upon the interview participants for its data in this area, and because this case study is bound at the beginning to when the study participants became part of the process themselves, the following analysis begins from the point at which the school principal first became aware of the opportunity to have the International Spanish Academy be established at Mill Creek School, and ends at the conclusion of the first school year of the program. Examining these events and the experiences of the key participants within these events leads to a richer documentation and understanding of the process of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy.

Selection of the Program Site

The first awareness of any of the study participants regarding the International Spanish Academy occurred when an email request soliciting interest was sent by the Superintendent of Edmonton Public Schools to all school principals in the district. This

email request invited the interested school administrators to a meeting with several central office staff. The school principal at Mill Creek School reported responding immediately to the message. His personal passion for different places, cultures and languages was triggered by the invitation, and as he stated, he "saw a wonderful opportunity to combine all of those things together. So I just jumped at the opportunity right away."

He then attended an information meeting along with several other interested school principals. At the end of the meeting, each of the school principals explained why their own school site would be suitable for the International Spanish Academy. The principal described that at that point,

> I had a sense that there was competition and on the other hand, I have a lot of respect for my colleagues in the district and if other principals were saying they had good reasons, I believed those were valid.

After that meeting, the school principal reported that for a long while, there were neither further events nor communications from the central office staff regarding this program. During a meeting with the school superintendent, however, he had the opportunity to express a desire for the program. As well, he shared the information with his staff. The English kindergarten teacher reported that her

> first reaction was "wow, this is really going to put some flavor into our school". I imagined it really would brighten up the whole student body, would brighten up the school in itself. It would just add that flavor which I felt was something that needed to be added to Mill Creek Elementary School.

She expressed also that the staff were very much hoping that they would receive the program: "…we kept our fingers crossed that we would be considered as the site because we knew that there were other schools vying for this."

The school principal also decided to share this possible initiative with the formal parent advisory group of his school community, the School Council. He discussed the possible program with the School Council President. From her perspective,

> he had kind of already started the ball rolling and just got information and was really keen on it so then brought me in and I was just really positive, and then we discussed how we would bring that forward to the parents, and that happened all really quickly.

According to the parent in this study, the parents at the School Council meeting also became very excited by the idea. Not long after, a second School Council meeting was held in which the group invited the central office staff member responsible for selecting the site, in a proactive move to clarify their understanding of the program and to communicate their strong interest in receiving the program at their school.

When the site had been selected by the central office staff, the principal reported receiving the notification by another email message. It was received by the principal with much excitement: "I was really excited. I was thinking this was a huge victory for us!" The parent, who was also the School Council President, reported hearing this news and being "ecstatic!"

The information about the site selection was then was required to be kept as a confidential matter until it received official approval through a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Edmonton Public Schools. The school principal, the assistant principal, the

curriculum coordinator, some parents and some central administrative staff attended the Board meeting and formally presented the recommendation that Mill Creek School become the site for the International Spanish Academy the following school year. The Board approved this recommendation. The next day, the school principal "wrote it on the chalkboard 'we are the new site for the International Spanish Academy'." Shortly after, the school principal sent a newsletter informing the parent community of the decision. According to the parent participant in the study, the reaction from the parent community was "...very positive. I mean the parents all were really, really wanting it. So they were honestly very excited." Immediately after this set of announcements were completed, a complex and intense process of preparing for the opening of the program the following September was initiated.

Preparation for the Program Opening

After the decision by the Board of School Trustees, regular communications were held between the lead central office staff and the school. Advertising and promotional materials and events were planned. Information meetings were held. The school principal described:

> When we were first starting off, we just saw how immense the whole project was going to be. I just ended up thinking that we would work it through and it would come about...I think at first there was the fear factor – and boy, this is big, what am I doing?

He further described his experiences during that time:

> Being a first year principal and the demands of having two different sites where people were saying they weren't seeing enough of me at both sites, the demands

> of setting up the Spanish Academy just put me in I would say May or June in a state of numbness. I was really - I had exhausted all my supplies of energy and I don't think the staff really realized the amount of work and time I had on my plate. And so as it got into June, there was no reserve of energy to deal with any emergent issues that came up. So perhaps my performance...and it might have been this way if there was a Spanish Academy or not, but it sure put a lot of extra work on my plate. It was like I had no one I could share with just how heavy my workload was at that point in time.

Multiple strategies were employed to try to communicate the advent of the program to Mill Creek School. Newspaper advertisements, flyers and brochures, special meetings and even a stall at the local Farmer's Market were used to advertise the new program. Information sessions were held for potential parents and community members. These meetings served to communicate the intended program goals and structure to the community and parents of potential students of the International Spanish Academy. As the parent described those meetings,

> There was just lots of confirmations that Spanish would be great for our kids. So I don't think I had a clear idea of what it would be, it was in a public school so it was going to be - I just thought it would be good and safe and it would be a new grade one/two class, that education would be solid – so that they wouldn't lose grasp of English, it wouldn't be something out there, we'd never tried this before, and the children come out not able to read or write in either language. Safe.

This parent reported subsequently talking to their children about the program to determine their level of interest in learning a new language. As their response was very

positive, "it was quite an easy decision." As well, the component of having an English program in the school also provided a sense of security in this decision, because the parent felt that should her child not be successful or happy in the Spanish program, there was a second option in the school.

There was an additional parent dimension to the preparations for the opening of this unknown and untried International Spanish Academy that provided some interesting insights. The parent participant in this study also served for several years as the School Council President, both prior to the opening of the program and during the first year of the program. During this preparation phase, there were anxious moments for her as well:

> Now as the School Council President, it became then a way bigger issue for me as for my job this year. Now, to have elementary, junior high, and the Spanish Academy, where there are these new whole set of parents that don't necessarily trust you or know you and don't know the public school system yet, don't know what the school is going to be like - if I was School Council President next year, which I was planning on doing – which I now am – how was I going to do that well?

So at this time, from many perspectives, moving into this unknown program was an unnerving yet exciting time.

The process of staffing for this unusual program was initiated. As is required through agreement with the Alberta Teachers' Association, advertisements for suitable candidates were first made to existing district teachers possessing permanent contracts. To teach in such bilingual program positions within the Edmonton Public Schools, professional teaching certificates are required. Of course, for the International Spanish

Academy, high degrees of skill in English and Spanish as well as the ability to teach Spanish to elementary children were prerequisite. In addition, it was anticipated that the first teachers into the program would require an additional set of leadership, coordination and communication skills to successfully support the implementation of the program through its first years. As the school principal described,

> Staffing was a big issue – going in and looking at the paper work, waiting for the district to do the language screen, interviewing…so I got the interview panel and interviews, dealing with staff concerns here about change and how de-stabilizing this might be for the school.

As the search for a suitable teacher already possessing a permanent contract with the school district was unsuccessful, the school district continued to seek other suitable teacher candidates for these specialized positions.

For the teacher participants in this study, who eventually became the successful candidates for these positions, their first awareness of the program and for their potential for becoming part of its inception began in a different manner. These teachers did not become aware of the program through the district's advertisements of potential teaching positions; instead, both of the teachers became aware of the programs through family members who had involvement in Spanish weekend schools. One of the Spanish teachers, for example, heard about the program through a flyer that was sent home through her child that was attending a local Spanish weekend school. A visiting friend saw the flyer and convinced the teacher that she should apply to teach in the program. The other Spanish teacher heard about the program through her husband who was teaching at a weekend Spanish school. Both teachers, upon first exposure to the announcement of the

advent of the International Spanish Academy, did not initially consider becoming teachers in the new program. One of the Spanish teachers expressed amazement at how the experience unfolded for her, even without her seeking it: "It's strange, how things just fall in your lap. I really felt like that, the way this happened. How I really got the information – it just kind of came to me. I wasn't out searching for it."

Over time, when this same teacher began to realize that she could potentially be selected to be interviewed and even chosen for the program, she thought, "Hey, this might really be a reality. This might come true! So that's when I got, you know, excited about it!"

Through unique paths, each of the teacher participants in this study was eventually invited to an interview. This interview required speaking to a panel consisting of the school principal, a Spanish consultant from central office, a parent and a teacher. For one teacher, the interview process invoked anxiety: "I was totally stressed out, I was so nervous…" For the other Spanish teacher, this interview caused anxiety and nervousness as well, but also a sense of success and accomplishment at the end:

> It was interesting. That was my first time I think I had ever, you know, I was involved in an interview where there were so many people asking me questions. It was just a little bit scary. I know I was very nervous during the interview, but I think it went well.

Of course, the perspective of interview process as experienced by the English teacher was slightly different: "It was awesome. I was so impressed with the people who we interviewed and I thought, boy, [school principal], you are going to have a tough time trying to pick between this group. The interviews were all, as I said, spectacular". These

interviews resulted in decisions by the principal to offer positions to the successful teachers. When the school principal called to offer her the position, one Spanish teacher accepted immediately, saying, "Yes of course! Absolutely. Like when do you want me to start? What do you want me to do?" For this teacher in particular, the notion of becoming a teacher in this unique and unfamiliar new program had a personal meaning:

> It was just the challenge factor. And I mean, the whole fact that I loved what the program was about. It's a full circle. Here I came as an immigrant child of this world to learn English as a second language, and so for me it's like wow, now I get to turn the tables around and say my kids are learning Spanish and have fun with it because Spanish is fun. It's fun to learn, it's fun to hear and so yeah. It was perfect timing. It was just perfect timing.

A tour of the school and familiarization with the current staff and programming followed. Although these new teachers desired to begin the process of building their classrooms and the new program, they were limited due to changes in some physical aspects of the school that would delay their move into their future classrooms.

The teachers were still able to begin their work to examine and gather resources for their future programs. A special project at Alberta Learning that was specifically designed to support this new program began that June. The purpose of the project was to review resources and evaluate potential teaching and learning resources for the International Spanish Academy. As a newly introduced provincial program, the provincial government's learning ministry was required to seek, acquire, review, evaluate and approve for use potential resources for this program. In this case as well, the amount and range of resources that would be required to initiate a new program of this type was

extensive, as both Spanish language resources and content area resources (i.e. mathematics resources) were to be required and essential to the program. As well, although experienced teachers within such programs are usually engaged for such work, in this case no experienced teachers in International Spanish Academies existed; therefore, experienced teachers of Spanish and the future program teachers were invited into this project.

The Spanish teachers attended these meetings and worked through this process of reviewing, evaluating and recommending specific resources that had been collected by Alberta Learning for this project. However, outside of these sessions the teachers did not yet have any resources with which they could work. No other schools nor teachers could be accessed to share or preview materials, as the program did not exist in any other location. As well, the materials were not accessible to them from a central office or library location. So although they felt the sessions at Alberta Learning were valuable, the teachers' inability to access those actual resources to prepare for their programs was a frustration:

> You do this great resource review – that's what [the other teacher] and I found out. We had all these great resources to look at, and everything was great, and then - pouf! You know, you can't look at them again – you're gone and we've got these - all the teachers are off, and we don't have anything to look at so that we can plan for September!

At the end of June, prior to the opening of the International Spanish Academy, a significant amount of uncertainty existed regarding the program equipment, structure and resources. As well, the first year student enrolments into the new program were not

confirmed. However, the Spanish staff members still continued to move forward in their preparations. As well, the other staff members were trying to prepare for this change in the school programming. During that summer just prior to the opening of the International Spanish Academy, the school principal went to Mexico, in an effort to learn Spanish.

> But about the third week in, I just hit the wall with trying to learn Spanish. I think that my brain was just full and it just became tedious trying to learn more and it gave me a realization of how difficult it is for our children here to learn a new language, although children find it easier than me to learn it.

Similarly, the English teacher enrolled in a Spanish course at the University of Alberta. As a result, she "…left the university program with a very strong idea of what it was going to be like for the Spanish Academy. That it wasn't only going to be language but it was going to be culture as well."

The Spanish teachers worked at the school through the summer to try to plan, gather resources, and set up their programs. They added special touches to their preparation, such as by writing and sending special letters of welcome their students. They gathered furniture and equipment, decorated their classrooms, and sought their resources. As well, the Spanish teachers attended the school district's week-long New Teachers' Institute, to become more familiar with the school district's practices. There were meetings as well with the curriculum consultants to examine this special program structure and the curriculum content for the Spanish program. All in all, it was an extraordinarily busy summer for all.

Even in the last days before the school opening for the new school year, there continued to be much activity and preparation occurring in the school. As the school principal described, "all the teachers here were in two weeks before. There was tremendous excitement in the school. I couldn't believe it!" The Spanish teachers were busy trying to set up their classrooms:

> It really hit me when August came around and I saw that there were still nothing in my room so I was scrounging looking around at garage sales trying to figure out, you know, what I was going to do for kindergarten because I knew they needed centers.

In addition to the teachers, it was reported by the school principal that the support staff were busy also in getting the program prepared for opening:

> We ordered so many supplies and materials that my admin assistant at Ritchie who does the finances was saying she was overwhelmed, she couldn't keep up with all the bills that were stacking up. So just everything – new furniture, new resources.

This period of intense preparation continued right until the first day of the opening of this program.

First Day of the Program

The first day of the International Spanish Academy was reportedly an exciting yet frenzied day for all involved. Most of the study participants indicated that this day would be remembered throughout their lives, as it was so unique and filled with anticipation and unusual events. At the beginning of that first day, one of the Spanish teachers recalled:

> I was nervous, I was totally like what am I doing? This is…am I going to make it through my first day? But it was good, it was a good day and I was so happy I made it that first week. I was the happiest person.

The flood of media interest, the staff and parent uncertainty of how this program would actually be, as well as managing the numerous additional students and parents entering the school and the program all contributed to the frenzy and excitement. The principal described the day as follows:

> I just remember lots of excitement. Oh, I think we had newspaper reporters; we had t.v. cameras; it was a real zoo because the students – we had no routines or procedures and yet here were the movie cameras - the video cameras and the newspaper reporters. We had pictures like that – that was the first day of school, we just had - it was a circus, it was just a circus. Lots of parents hanging around outside the doors just sort of wondering how this would go.

For the teachers, managing the new parents and the entry of the new students into the school as well as managing the media presence all posed significant challenges on their first day. As the school had previously had a very small and familiar student population, the organizational procedures that were used to smoothly direct the students to their new classrooms had been quite simple. However, the combination of numerous new students arriving that first day, along with the new situation of multiple classes for each grade, caused confusion among both the parents and the students. The staff had not anticipated this potential challenge of gathering and organizing the new and old students into their proper new programs. Some students ended up in the wrong lineups and the wrong classes, and it took a significant amount of extra time to organize and match the students

with their proper programs and classrooms. In the end, all of the staff members realized that a clearer system of directing the parents and students to the correct classrooms would be required for the next year. The media attention as well required an extraordinary amount of management and time. As one Spanish teacher described,

> That was a little stressful, the media. Coming in, and wanted to interview the parents and the kids and then wanting a shot – they came, they came in just before I had done that lesson on the little cat. So we – I had to get them all – they were actually being dismissed and the media arrived. So it was very hectic. We had to get them back in, get them to sit and I did a mock- you know, of what I had just done. So that was – that was nuts! But what can you do, you know?

For the student, the excitement of the day had a different focus. For her, the unfamiliarity of the language, the teacher and the program caused her the most anxiety:

> On the first day of school I was really, really nervous. I guess I really missed my mom, I don't know why I felt that, but it sort of - I don't know, like you don't know your teacher and she speaks a whole other language and you think she's just, like I'll speak Spanish or something, it's just scary a bit. Once you – like on the second day, you're fine. You get used to it."

The parent echoed that the event caused a great deal of stress for her daughter, but also reported that this was not necessarily true for her son, who was looking forward to the first day of school as a kindergarten student, and did not seem to be concerned that it would involve a new language, a new teacher or a new program structure. But in general, the consensus among all study participants was that the unusual media attention, the excitement and curiosity caused by the unfamiliarity with the program, and the effect of

dealing with additional students and classrooms all contributed to the fact that this day in particular would stick in their memories for a long, long time.

The Opening Weeks

Throughout the first weeks of the International Spanish Academy, echoes of the excitement and frenzy of the first day continued to be felt. Some of the major factors contributing to this state were the large amounts of continuing media attention for this new program, the adjustments that needed to be made within one of the classrooms, and the gradual acclimatization to and evolution of the structure of the new program as enacted by the teachers in their classrooms.

The media attention continued to add an unusual dimension to the beginning weeks of the program. Newspaper, television and radio interviews were held, frequently involving the teachers, school principal, parents and students. The student, parent, school principal and Spanish teachers in this study all were interviewed at some point during the first few weeks. One of the Spanish teachers described,

> I guess I was surprised. I was surprised. But then, you know, once it happens you think, oh, you know, it shouldn't be surprising because it's a brand new program, you know, people want to know about it, it's a neat thing, parents are excited, people want to, you know, find out.

The other Spanish teacher explained:

> Especially, it all seemed to be happening in September. In October I literally thought that was it, I'm like ok, I can't do this anymore, it was just too much. It was a lot – with everything going on, I'm like my goodness, this is so much!

She reported experiencing a high degree of stress that was caused from the extensive media coverage, as she was called upon for radio interviews, television news filming, and newspaper interviews during those first few weeks, especially those that she was called upon to participate in spontaneously.

At the same time, the large numbers of children in the new International Spanish Academy kindergarten class were becoming a concern. In the middle of September, the school principal attempted to split the class into two classes, but not many parents were able to change their schedules to accommodate the shift in the children's programming time; in the end, the class was kept as one large group. That created the need for classroom assistance, which caused additional shifting of staff from the other school under the principal's responsibility into the Spanish program. For the kindergarten Spanish teacher, who was new to teaching at the kindergarten level, adjusting again to working with a classroom assistant was required, although welcomed. In her own words, "It was very tough. That first month of school was hectic."

The gradual enactment of the initial model of the program structure of the International Spanish Academy into a real program also provided an unusual challenge during these first few weeks. The teachers began with daily structures and pedagogical practices that reflected their interpretations of the model. Over time, as they tried new approaches, resources and adjusted their daily routines to meet the needs of their students and the programs, they began to settle into a structure that became the new International Spanish Academy. This evolution, which began in these first few weeks, is anticipated to be a growth and change process that will continue over the years to come.

Settling in: The Daily Routines and Operations

In terms of the day-to-day functioning of the International Spanish Academy, many aspects resembled those of regular school programming. However, this type of programming, to run smoothly, required extra steps and extra considerations to the regular processes. For example, in order to promote consistency and unity between the English track students and the Spanish program students, the kindergarten teachers of each program met frequently and began a routine of planning and preparing together. Translations and adaptations of their work together also became the norm: "I meet with [the English teacher] on a weekly basis, every Sunday we meet, we plan, and then I take that and adapt it to the Spanish."

Adjusting the initial structure of the daily program also was required. The original program structure, as it became enacted, became more and more fine-tuned to the needs of the students and to ensure the most effective use of classroom time. The kindergarten Spanish teacher, for example, established a routine of beginning the school day with her students in Spanish, then beginning the English portion after the midmorning snack time. As well, the recess time for her students became adjusted to the end of the morning to maximize the instructional time and to minimize disruptions in student learning:

> I have Spanish to cover too and I'm finding that with the split right at that recess time – getting them ready, getting them back in – and at that time I didn't have an aide, so getting them ready by myself, getting them all back in, calmed down…it wasn't working and I found we were wasting a lot of time. So this time we go straight through, and we have our snack and then we just go straight through until 11:30…they're fine. We move around a lot too. I do a lot of dancing and singing

with them. So…and then they're ready to go at 11:30. I just find it's more continuous.

Her new teaching assistant became integrated into the program. Activities involving both the English and Spanish kindergarten students working or participating together were frequent, and gradually became a normal part of the program. These adjustments and small changes resulted in the gradual evolution of the original plan into the actual program.

Outside of the classroom and the school, the Spanish teachers participated in two additional projects that were ongoing throughout the first year of the program. The first such project was the continuation of the review of Spanish resources that had begun the previous June. The second project was a large project to develop program implementation manuals for all bilingual programs in Edmonton Public Schools. In this particular project, the Spanish teachers worked together with teachers of other bilingual programs to share and document effective teaching activities, instructional strategies and assessment strategies.

This project as well contributed to the fine-tuning of the International Spanish Academy, as the discussions and interactions with experienced teachers of the other existing bilingual programs in the school district furthered many aspects of the Spanish teachers' understandings of this form of bilingual programming. At these meetings, the Spanish teachers had opportunities to dialogue with other experienced bilingual program teachers in such areas as program structure and implementation, instructional strategies, assessment and reporting of student achievement, planning and meeting individual student needs within the context of these specialized programs. This project as well

contributed to the enactment and evolution of the International Spanish Academy throughout the first weeks and months. In looking back at this time, one Spanish teacher described her response to these experiences:

> But it's exciting, you know, I'm enjoying my time here. It's been a really good learning experience. I've learned a lot. I'm learning, you know. Even with our meetings that we have downtown, language, the manuals, the resource review, the other bilingual teachers, the - wow! My gosh! There's, there's a lot to learn, and I love that! And I think that's why I decided to come here to, you know, to try this International Spanish Academy out.

The English teacher explained that although time was passing by and the beginning days of the program were over, "the excitement hasn't died down. We still have people that I know of that are calling that I hear of, wanting some information. People dropping by, and not only going into [the Spanish kindergarten] classroom, but coming into my classroom." The principal described a very intensive time as well, as the program established itself within the school:

> It was pretty high stress all year round. Fortunately we've got a really loving sort of staff and they get along really well together and there were times when we just realized the tension was getting high and we just called everybody down, got them the ice cream, just talked it out. I think there was one meeting there where people just needed to put it on the table. They needed to - they came together and we worked through all the hot issues and then it's done.

All in all, the first weeks and months of the enactment of the International Spanish Academy were a period of trials and adjustments to the realities and needs of the program

and school. For a usually small and quiet school, dealing with many new parents and students, handling the large amount of media attention, supporting the adjustment of new staff members, and shifting to accommodate a new alternative program all took time and involved a process of change. While this evolution was occurring, many special events were occurring that added further dimensions to the establishment year.

Special Events

There were three events of special note that occurred through the initial year of the International Spanish Academy that warrant description and discussion. These events were: the first large school concert involving both programs at the school; the labor dispute and disruption that marked that year; and the Grand Opening of the International Spanish Academy. Although each of these events on its own may not be remarkable, they each bear their own significance and impact on this initial year of the program.

The first Christmas concert of the International Spanish Academy was an important event in the school. It represented the first large-scale effort involving all of the staff and students of both the English and the Spanish program, working together to create and deliver a Christmas program involving and representing both programs. It was a huge success, both in terms of the quality of the program and in the bringing together elements of both the English and the Spanish programs:

> I see everybody – especially for this Christmas concert really working together as a team trying to make things look good and I'm really impressed in spite of the school being so small and kind of really not known. Our music specialist is putting on a phenomenal play. I've seen concerts before and I've put on concerts, but this is top notch. She adapted it to include the Spanish element to it – like she

changed the play so that it would be about a little girl coming up to Canada from Mexico and upset that she can't share her traditions with her friends. It's beautiful.

Such an event also served to demonstrate this collaboration, quality and unity of both programs within the school to the parent and community audiences.

To the contrary, in February of the first year of the International Spanish Academy, a labor dispute erupted. All schools within Edmonton Public Schools were closed due to a teacher strike. This strike happened to occur right in the middle of the first year of this new program, in the midst of the advertising and planning for the next year, and in the middle of preparing for the Grand Opening of the International Spanish Academy. As school principal described:

> The work stoppage, the labor dispute was certainly a low point in terms of staff morale, being respected by the government and the powers that be. And I don't know if that colored the whole year, but certainly I have been reeling ever since trying to catch up to the work that was missed in those couple of weeks.

The teacher strike was a difficult event for all involved, and added another challenge to both teachers and administration in the midst of this important year.

The Grand Opening was held shortly after the teachers returned to work; in many ways, the loss of preparation time added to the stress of preparing for this major event. The school principal described this point in time:

> I think that was hectic. The opening of the Spanish Academy, we were right in the area of work stoppage labor disputes. I think it was the thing that sealed the whole Academy for us in terms of understanding the success and getting the numbers we

need for this year. It was really important. But it was certainly a terribly stressful time for teachers in terms of the whole work stoppage, open house thing that was happening at that point in time. But I think it was impressive in terms of what we were able to pull together with not a lot of preparation going into it. We had prepared long in advance but we hadn't done all the leg work until just prior.

The Grand Opening of the International Spanish Academy was a wonderful celebration highlighting presentations of dance, poetry, music, and including formal speeches and a ribbon-cutting ceremony. It involved the students, parents, staff, school district administration, representatives form Alberta Learning and community members in the celebration. It was a great success, was highlighted in the media, and provided a means through which all were able to reflect on the early successes of the program and to look forward to the future of the program.

Year End and Planning for Year Two

For all participants in the study, the year end was a time for planning for the next year, and a time for reflection on the past year. For the school principal, closing up the first year of the International Spanish Academy and preparing for the second year continued to pose both new and now familiar challenges. The classes were expanding to five classes, with a doubling of the Spanish enrolments predicted. There was a need for hiring two additional teachers, expanding classroom space, supplies, computers, and making alterations to classrooms in preparation for the new classes.

So life is going at an amazing pace! We're looking at getting new furniture and new computers and making alterations to classrooms. So it's even busier than it

was last year at this time. But at least you know what you're doing now in terms of having the year under your belt and it's been successful.

For the teachers, it was a time for saying goodbye to their first students in the International Spanish Academy, and a time to prepare for their new assignments and new colleagues. For the student, planning for her next year at in the program did not evoke anxiety this time: "I'm not too scared about that because I'm kind of going to already know everybody!"

The end of the year was also a time for reflection on the completed first year of the program. Most study participants reported having significantly changed in a variety of ways, and feeling a sense of accomplishment and pride. As the school principal described this:

> It was at the beginning this big venture and then at the end it's a sense of accomplishment really. I think it's been enriching for me and for my staff and for students, and for this whole community. I think it's been a great opportunity. It's certainly been one of the highlights of my career to be involved with this.

The student in this study expressed her perspectives in a simpler yet succinct manner: "I think it was really fun. I think it's very exciting to learn Spanish." Overall, all study participants expressed that the year had been successful, and there was a sense of looking both backward to celebrate the successes, but also of looking forward to another exciting year in the International Spanish Academy.

This chronological examination of the establishment of the new program serves to illustrate the sequence of events that set the context of this first year. The descriptions of the experiences of the study participants within those events also provide insights as to

how the events were perceived, and how they impacted some of the key participants in this process. Next, it is important to explore the key structural components that formed the foundation of the program, to uncover a new set of insights into the essential underpinnings of the International Spanish Academy.

The Foundational Elements of the Program

This study can clearly inform future decision-makers about the key elements necessary to the establishment of new International Spanish Academies, new bilingual or second language programs, or in fact, new alternative programs of many types. Throughout much of the study, the participants highlighted that key components needed to be in place in a timely manner to ensure that establishment of the new program would be both smooth and effective. The elements that were highlighted throughout the data were in the following areas:

- Program structure
- Teacher preparation, training and skills;
- Resources
- Funding; and
- Promotion

These areas were evident as having enormous impact on the successful establishment of the International Spanish Academy.

Program Structure

The initial proposed structure of this new International Spanish Academy, as described in Chapter Two, was created through a central administration process in the school district, in collaboration with Alberta Learning and the Ministry of Education and

Culture of Spain. Essentially, the new program was envisioned collaboratively through many discussions and in a sense, negotiations, between these three stakeholder groups. The diversity of the international and local Spanish-speaking communities, the involvement of the government of Spain, and the previous successful structures of other bilingual international language programs in the school district and the province were all factors influencing the original program vision and structure. Although this new Spanish bilingual program was designed based on existing western Canadian models of bilingual international language programs, the existing models had been established only in other languages, such as Chinese (Mandarin), German and Ukrainian. Essentially, the International Spanish Academy introduced a new language program type to the existing complement of bilingual programs within Edmonton Public Schools. As the International Spanish Academy had never yet been established in Canada, no exact models existed to be used as reference models for the architects of this new program. As well, within these models there already existed a certain degree of flexibility; decisions regarding these flexible elements needed to be made.

Interpreting the proposed structure of this new, unique program into a real school program within the public education system in Alberta was a fundamental process in the program's establishment. However, this original program structure and vision provided a framework that was open to a fairly broad spectrum of interpretations and applications. Although the framework for the program structure of the International Spanish Academy had been documented in detail in early reports and vision documents by both the government of Spain and Edmonton Public Schools, the implementation and interpretation of that structure into the real program emerged as a challenge that needed

to be considered and reconsidered as new aspects presented themselves over time. Therefore, once the school was designated and school-based leadership and staff were established, various levels of decision-making and interpretation of this program structure were required. The school administration and then the teachers very much needed to make at first broad decisions and interpretations of the intended program structure; then, as time passed, the decisions became more specific and detailed. This was very evident in the data that emerged from the study participants as the enactment of the program progressed.

The participants in this study shared their first conceptualizations and interpretations of the vision, intent and structure of the program. Later, they described in more and more detail how these original conceptualizations became enacted in the actual program. The initial concepts, for example, seem to have been drawn from aspects of their previous experiences. For example, the Spanish teacher with French Immersion as a background experience explained:

> I probably assumed it would be Spanish Immersion. Just because of "International Spanish Academy", I think I just assumed it would be in Spanish, so I think that would be my first impression, until I became more familiar with it and found out it was a bilingual program.

The English teacher also drew on her prior knowledge of an existing academy within the school district:

> It was referred to as the International Spanish Academy, and for me, the word "Academy" – I kind of looked upon it as the "Vimy Ridge Academy" in that it was a program that was offering a variety of aspects and not just the flavor of

> Spanish but the culture and the heritage so the child was completely immersed rather than just learning the Spanish language. So I think the word Academy to me meant more flavor rather than just focusing on the language.

She also provided some interesting insights about her perceptions about the future physical delivery arrangement of the program, explaining that she thought that the school would be "housing in one section of our school the Spanish Academy. So it would be English on one side and then the Spanish on the other side." One of the Spanish teachers expressed her original uncertainty about the influence of the government of Spain in the actual future programming: "At first I wasn't sure if the Spanish from Spain connotation was going to really lead it and I've seen that no, I think all the other cultures and countries are really well represented within the program. So I think that's a good thing."

Over time, the discussion in this study became more concrete and more specific to enacting and adjusting the original program structure of the International Spanish Academy to the context of the school. The principal, for example, described the decisions that needed to be made regarding restructuring the staffing support for the very large kindergarten Spanish class that was formed. The teachers described the decisions that were made regarding the specific structuring of their class times to ensure both the English instructional requirements and the Spanish instructional requirements were met. They also described having to explain to parents their methods of balancing the English and Spanish instruction within their classrooms. Overt decisions were made by the teachers to ensure alignment of themes, activities, special events, and, to a certain degree, instruction between the English program and the Spanish program, again fine-tuning exactly how the program would become specifically enacted within that school. The

parent in the study described the general acceptance of the combined class structure that was established for the Grade 1 and 2 class. Of special interest were the detailed descriptions of the day-to-day class structure that was provided by the student participant in this study, who happened to be in this Grade 1 and 2 combined class. She provided vivid details of how the teaching occurred within her Spanish classroom. She also described the students' perceptions that because the International Spanish Academy had been placed upstairs in the school with the older students, the young International Spanish Academy students felt "grown up". Near the end of the first year, one of the Spanish teachers provided an interesting reflection about the structure of the program as compared to her French Immersion experience:

> It's different. I think it's - it's more of a challenge than French Immersion because you have to make sure you're meeting those English outcomes. You know, whereas French Immersion, it's all French, you know. I think it's more of a challenge trying to do a bilingual program then a French Immersion. It would be easier for a teacher to do an immersion. It would be nice if one day this could be an immersion program.

Each of these descriptions identified the more concrete realities that needed to be considered and the decisions that needed to be made within the school to bring the broad program vision of the International Spanish Academy into a programming reality.

Teacher Preparation, Training, Qualities and Skills

From many perspectives, the teacher preparation, training, qualities and skills emerged as potentially the most important factors in the successful establishment of the International Spanish Academy. This study found that the following were identified as

critical characteristics of teachers hired into the establishment year of the International Spanish Academy:

- rich background teaching experiences and training, especially in elementary bilingual education
- high degree of fluency in both Spanish and English
- strong interpersonal skills
- strong communication skills
- passion for the Spanish language and Spanish-speaking cultures

Most of the study participants made frequent reference to the training, past experiences, preparation, skills and qualities of the teachers, confirming this as being essential and fundamental to the success of the International Spanish Academy.

Acquiring skilled and experienced teachers proved to be a challenge in establishing the first International Academy. At first, the positions at the school were advertised to teachers with continuing contracts within the school board; in absence of suitable candidates from that teaching pool, the school district looked beyond. In the end, both of the Spanish teachers interviewed came to the program with unique yet extensive background experiences and strengths. For example, one of the Spanish teachers had extensive experience teaching in a French Immersion program; the other teacher had taught in a Spanish bilingual program in Chile. They both had received teaching degrees at the University of Alberta, and both had other interesting studies and careers prior to taking their new teaching positions at the International Spanish Academy. Regardless of their backgrounds, the teachers indicated that these past experiences and training prepared them to deal with this new context of teaching in the International Spanish

Academy. For example, one of the teachers described drawing on her French Immersion experience to understand the vision, structure and goals of this new program, as well for dealing with the curriculum, planning, meeting individual students needs, etc.: "Gosh, thank goodness I had the experience from my French immersion background!". The school principal, as well, expressed the importance of hiring teachers with background experiences at this time in the program's establishment:

> But particularly finding Spanish speakers who have teaching certificates and experience teaching in an elementary education – both of my first two teachers had experience teaching and the ones I just hired now are directly right out of university. I can do that now with the programs established, but I wouldn't want to hire two teachers directly out of university the first year.

The richness of the teachers' background experiences, skills, and preparation emerged as playing an important role in the implementation of the program.

Within that skill set, but deserving of special discussion, is the importance of language proficiency in delivering quality bilingual programming. Both teachers frequently emphasized the importance of high degrees of fluency in the Spanish and English languages as a requisite skill of teachers in the International Spanish Academy. One teacher stated,

> For me this would be the most fundamental part of establishing a bilingual program would be that you have to have knowledgeable people in both languages teaching both languages. It doesn't matter if it's a second language, as long as you can speak that language fluently.

Her sentiments were strongly reflected in the statements made by the other Spanish teacher. References were also made throughout the study to the importance of the Spanish teachers' Spanish language levels in light of the expectations and scrutiny of the Spanish-speaking parents and communities. All in all, it was consistently indicated that Spanish and English language proficiency was critical to the successful implementation of the new program, and will always be a key factor.

It was identified that the establishment of the International Spanish Academy required much more than the usual skill set required in a regular teaching position. Aside from the usual skills in teaching and programming, the study participants indicated that the first year of the International Spanish Academy required the teachers to have both strong interpersonal skills and strong communication skills, to enable them to effectively perform the unusual duties associated with the establishment of such a new and unique program. During this first year, the teachers were frequently required to take on unusual additional tasks that required high degrees of these skills, such as responding to the media, such as giving radio, newspaper and television interviews. The new positions also required interpreting, translating for communicating with potential new families and for creating marketing and communication materials about the program. The teachers also became responsible for connecting and communicating with the local communities. Creating and adapting many new resources for the Spanish program (translating, modifying, etc.) was extensively required to support their day-to-day teaching. Additionally, establishing both a physical and social environment that reflected the Spanish-English bilingual nature of the International Spanish Academy became their responsibility, such as creating numerous visual displays in Spanish and ensuring that

school-wide programs and events contained Spanish elements. One Spanish teacher described being "a teacher and a promoter of the program, and also even translating for parents that come in and they don't know how to fill in the applications. So kind of like an ambassador! So I've had to wear many different hats this year!" The intensity and unusual demands of the first year of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy imposed numerous additional tasks and responsibilities that were much beyond a normal assignment and required an additional set of skills and qualities in the teachers.

The student's and parent's perspective of the skills and qualities of the teachers reflected much more of an emphasis on their personal qualities. Throughout the data, there was evidence that the Spanish teachers had worked hard to establish relationships of caring, openness and trust. The student very much liked her teacher, stating in her first interview, "It's really fun. I really like my teacher. I've met her family and she's really, really nice!" In her final interview, she stated, "Well, all of the teachers are very, very good and they speak English, too!" The parent was very positive, expressing appreciation of one teacher's "open door policy", as well as the collaboration and interpersonal skills that were demonstrated between the teachers of the English program and the teachers of the Spanish. Therefore, it was very evident that the strong interpersonal skills and the communication skills were essential in light of the additional tasks and considerations required of this new and specialized program.

Finally, throughout the data, the school principal and the teachers all identified their passion for the Spanish language and Spanish-speaking cultures. One teacher expressed this as follows:

> I'm enjoying doing it, so I think the students see that I love teaching and that I love teaching Spanish. I think because it's a cultural thing, of who I am and what it's about. I could never teach a regular program again!

The frequent discussion of the participants' passions for the program juxtaposed against the extensive and unusual demands of this new program that were revealed through the data suggests that this passion may have provided the energy, commitment and motivation to perform above and beyond the usual expectations of their careers. The data also suggests that this personal passion may also be an essential element of the teacher qualities that supported the successful implementation of this new program.

Resources

The lack of program resources was a central concern that emerged throughout the interviews. Physical equipment, teaching and learning resources, and to a much lesser degree, human support resources were all identified as being very inadequate during the program start-up of this new program.

Initially, the lack of the basic physical classroom resources, such as desks, chairs, tables, and carpeted seating areas for the children, presented a high degree of stress and frustration to the Spanish teaching staff who were already trying to deal with many other elements of the program establishment. As well, the initial extreme lack of teaching and learning resources to support the implementation of the Spanish language components caused serious concern. The lack of human support resources, such as classroom assistance and experienced mentors, were identified but to a much lesser degree than the previous two categories. The absence of appropriate resources was not only a concern of the Spanish teachers, however; the school principal, the English teacher and the parent all

expressed their concerns regarding these elements. And throughout all of these concerns, the lack of both time and funding were identified as contributing factors to this situation.

In the category of basic physical classroom resources, several study participants indicated that the International Spanish Academy essentially began as a set of barren rooms, and through much effort and hard work these rooms became transformed into lively, vibrant classrooms. As one Spanish teacher described, they were lacking in "everything. Like from manuals to tables to desks to cubbies to everything – absolutely anything would have been nice!" The English teacher described the transformation as follows:

> When we first started up, I don't think anyone really had an idea of what it was going to be like. I remember that classroom upstairs, it was [the Spanish teacher's], just being an empty dead space and now it's such a bubbly, warm, beautiful environment.

One of the Spanish teachers shared many descriptions of the beginning.

> Bare. There was absolutely nothing and [the other Spanish teacher] and I came in and started putting things up on the walls. Just bare. And basically the things that we were told, I said I needed a chair to sit, we were told to look around the school and if we could find extra things, to use them. Like if we found extra tables just to pull them in there to use for now.

The additional pressures of having extensive media interest, and interest from the parents and community in seeing what this new program would look like, seemed to have added significant additional pressures on the staff, especially the Spanish teachers.

The teachers spent a significant amount of their summer vacation time in order to build classrooms that would both meet the needs of their impending students, and would give a positive image of the program, in spite of the lacking furniture and materials. As one Spanish teacher stated, "I was just nervous because, and just a little frustrated, because I didn't have all the things that I needed – the 'stuff'." The principal expressed concern about the impact of this added work and these pressures on the teachers:

> The Spanish teachers really felt overwhelmed with all the work that they had to do. In fact, by August 31, the first day when I met…the first day teachers were supposed to come back, I said to the whole staff that I was really concerned about the amount of work on my Spanish teachers shoulders and the stress that they were under already. And that was the first official day of school. But they were waiting for desks to come in, they didn't have materials, and I think what helped the most is I just said to them this is a long-term process. We can't have it all ready for when the doors open. We ordered so many supplies and materials that my admin assistant at Ritchie who does the finances was saying she was overwhelmed, she couldn't keep up with all the bills that were stacking up. So just everything – new furniture, new resources and just odd that I had to comment that I was worried about how hard our Spanish teachers were working on the first day of school.

The teachers themselves recognized the stress of their situation at the beginning of the year:

> I guess just the stress of trying to set up a room without having the stuff there. That was very stressful. I felt like these things should be in place, there should be

things here in place for a brand new teacher that's coming to start a brand new program. At least the physical things. So I guess the beginning of the year was just really low that way.

The teachers felt as though they needed to do anything they possibly could to get their classrooms ready for the program opening. In addition to the physical aspects of the classrooms, the teachers were gravely concerned about the lack of teaching and learning resources. Through the interviews, it was revealed that the teachers had extremely limited resources available to them at the start of the International Spanish Academy, and that although many materials were acquired throughout the year, the acquisition of materials would be an ongoing process and also an ongoing concern, as the program expands to new grade levels.

The areas of need specifically identified were the Spanish language materials. Those specifically identified as severely lacking included textbook-style materials, teaching units, teacher resource manuals and teaching guides, manipulative materials, library books, software, reading and writing materials, assessment materials and tools, and also materials to support the subject areas being taught in Spanish. The teachers frequently indicated that they constantly needed to translate and adapt materials to deliver their programs, because either the needed support materials were not available in Spanish, or because the available Spanish materials were not always developed to meet the needs and language proficiency levels of the International Spanish Academy students. There was mention that the Mathematics resources that the school district had developed were of help, and that the teachers were appreciative of the fact that there was at least an extensive curriculum document that had been developed for this program just prior to its

establishment, "like, the curriculum. That was one big thing that was done, which is great, to have the curriculum there. Have it done. I'm thankful about that!" However, the frequent need for translation or adaptation was a concern because of the work and time required above and beyond the usual demands of teaching. As the kindergarten Spanish teacher described, her usual preparation pattern involved not only planning for her program with her colleague, but then the next steps were usually required:

> the physical part was a big one at the beginning , and then the planning stuff is ongoing. And I'm still going through some parts of the curriculum, and saying, "how do I best do that?" And then I meet with [the English teacher] on a weekly basis, every Sunday we meet, we plan, and then I take that and adapt it to the Spanish.

There was also an official review of resources that was in the process of completion by Alberta Learning. This project was specifically seeking to locate, evaluate and approve for provincial use materials specifically for the International Spanish Academy. Both of the Spanish teachers in this study were participating in that review process. Their involvement in that resource review project was identified as greatly assisting in their awareness, identification and acquisition of effective teaching and learning resources for their program throughout this first year. When one Spanish teacher was asked about that process she indicated that it was very valuable to "… be able to look at the resources and to see what was out there. And also, to be able to determine which ones were good resources and which ones weren't." The other Spanish teacher, however, emphasized the importance of that process to the effective implementation of her program:

> If I would have never been part of that thing, I'd be clueless I think. I really would be. Because I would have not only had the opportunity to look through resources and say this is better than this, but at Alberta Learning I actually had the time to say "wow, this covers this content area" and "wow, this is really appropriate language for the grade level". But if you're buying a resource you've never seen through a magazine, you can't tell the text, you can't tell nothing. It was essential that I went through that.

Yet, although the resource review was occurring and many resources had been acquired and examined for their appropriateness for the International Spanish Academy, there were still pervading concerns about financing the purchase of the new resources. It became evident that there was a lack of clarity as to the amount of funds available at the school for the purchase of resources for the program and the proper process for requesting and acquiring new resources. To meet their resource needs, the teachers began to use other strategies for acquiring materials, such as enlisting parent help: "I know one of the parents that works for a company that deals with Latin American countries is going to get a lot of pictures for me - posters of different countries, Spanish speaking countries." Other strategies included borrowing books from a local community school that teaches Spanish on weekends, and borrowing Spanish books from the public library for use in the classroom. The parent described her assistance in this area: "We were really aware of the lack of resources. I even went to the public library, Edmonton Public Library, got books…they were just so lacking right at the very beginning."

The teachers identified the lack of classroom equipment and Spanish teaching and learning resources as key areas of concern and stress. Additionally, the teachers

emphasized a variety of strategies that could have been employed to reduce these concerns, such as through conducting the provincial resources review process earlier, clearer lines of communication regarding the available school budget for teaching and learning resources, and providing a large initial funding allocation to support the expense of acquisition of the appropriate resources during the program establishment. It was expressed that earlier and deeper consideration and acquisition of resources would have greatly contributed to a smoother implementation of the program.

In terms of the human support resources, it was identified early in the school year that additional classroom assistance for the Spanish kindergarten was in order. This was provided, but took some time to put into place. As well, the Spanish teachers identified that it would have been beneficial to have had some kind of coach, or mentor, more frequently available to them for additional guidance in their instruction and programming. When asked to identify the biggest challenge of opening the International Spanish Academy, one of the Spanish teachers stated:

> Resources, maybe not having other people around to kind of guide you through it that have done it before – to give you the steps so that you don't reinvent the wheel and say "Don't do that, this is how it will be easier". So having a coach maybe…or a mentor, somebody that can kind of just be there.

Both Spanish teachers had become involved in the school district's new teacher program, which provided a certain amount of new teacher mentorship and support. A small amount of consultant support was provided. However, the strongest desire that was expressed by the teachers was for guidance from another teacher, especially one that could be working within their school, with experience in their unique type of programming at the

International Spanish Academy. However, the focus throughout the interviews was much less in the area of human resources, but instead heavily emphasized the need for physical classroom resources, and teaching and learning resources. Fundamentally, the concern with the resources is strongly tied to the next discussion regarding funding.

Funding

Although rarely overtly stated by the participants in this study, it seems evident that the main cause of the concerns regarding the lack of appropriate equipment and materials is linked to inadequate funding of the start-up of the program. The school into which the International Spanish Academy was placed had gradually dwindled in both its student population and the amount of space in the school that was being utilized for school programming. Through the gradual process of downsizing, excess equipment is normally redistributed to other schools, or discarded as the equipment and resources aged. So, the start-up of two new classrooms required the acquisition or purchase of basic furniture and materials, as well as the added need for materials and equipment specifically tailored for the Spanish teaching components. For a small school, the impact of this expansion without significant additional funding seems to have had a major effect. The principal himself describes one aspect of the funding issue: "One of the big obstacles has been just for equipment....just for expanding resources – that continues to be an obstacle." The staff was also sensitive to the financial burden of starting up the program, even though the needs of the program in terms of equipment and resources were great. As the English teacher said, in describing the Spanish teachers,

> They don't feel that there's enough money available to buy the resources. I know that that's been a big thing – that I've heard rumblings about and I can believe it

> because [a Spanish teacher] has had to go to garage sales to purchase items and she's had a parent who's organized a collecting of juice boxes so that you can buy computer games and it's not.... it's not the principal's fault. I think it's just very expensive to start up a new program.

One Spanish teacher praised the school principal for his attentiveness to their needs for resources, but acknowledged her perception that limitations on spending existed, stating that he " always asked us what was needed and did we have enough and he was very supportive with the resources. But there was a limit to how much we could order". The parent participant in the study expressed a strong awareness of the lack of funds, and described the strategies of the School Council to assist, including a silent auction from which "all of the proceeds from the silent auction go towards buying books because I realized that we just - Spanish especially - have no resource of books. They're very, very limited".

One teacher also attributed the fact that they had to prepare in advance during their personal time as being caused by a limitation of funds: "Time...we could have always used a bit more time to get prepared but that's also a money issue." In referring to the perceived advantages that were afforded to the new International Spanish Academy that was being established in Calgary, one teacher focused on the financial aspect:

> Money. First of all, I know that they had a lot of money, a lot of good resources, so either before they started their resource review they had their resources in their classrooms. They had the time to go over the resources during the summer to plan. So that definitely would have been helpful to have had some kind of resource in our hands to plan with. Yeah. I think, you know - anything!

So insufficient funding was seen to have had a significant impact on the establishment of the International Spanish Academy.

Promotion

The data indicates that a key element to the successful establishment of the quality and amount of promotion and marketing of the program. It is evident that this element needs to be seriously considered and planned for in the establishment of any such program, both to reap the positive benefits but also to avoid the potential pitfalls, as the effects of extensive marketing and promotion on the school and the school staff are potentially beneficial and potentially damaging. The interviews revealed that the promotion of the International Spanish Academy was very important, and had both positive and negative impacts on the school and school community.

There were many stakeholders involved in the initial promotion and marketing of the International Spanish Academy. Of course, the goal of the initial marketing efforts was to attract as many potential students as possible. The interviews revealed that the efforts to promote the program included the following strategies:

- the use of mass media, such as radio, television, and newspapers,
- communication through smaller community newspapers, newsletters, and community schools
- flyers and brochures
- word of mouth
- information meetings
- booths at a local Farmer's Market

Support for the marketing and promotion of the program was received from the central office of Edmonton Public Schools, both through a financial contribution and through consulting and marketing management support. The principal highlighted his appreciation for this support, and the resulting benefits to the school and the program.

The participants in the study each seem to have been actively involved in the promotion and marketing of the program, in their own unique ways. The principal, for example, became very actively involved quite early in this process, creating brochures, giving radio interviews and speaking with parent groups. The Spanish teachers also became heavily involved in such activities, especially the mass media events, such as radio and television spots, newspaper interviews, etc. The English teacher expressed a high degree of participation in promoting the program other ways, such as through word-of-mouth and by volunteering to provide information to the community through handing out information and talking to parents from a special booth set up at a local Farmer's Market. She believed that, "if anything, that, I think, was a big introduction aside from the newspaper and the radio."

The parent in this study had herself participated in a television interview, along with the student. Of interest is that when asked her perspective on what the biggest challenge was in establishing the International Spanish Academy, the parent stated, "from my perspective, good publicity." She also cited that gaining people's confidence in the program, in the early stages, was part of that challenge. As well, all study participants participated in the Grand Opening of the International Spanish Academy, which, although it was primarily a celebration of the opening of the new program, also served to promote the program to the following year's potential students. Therefore, in their own

ways, each study participant contributed to this important process of advertising and communicating this new program. At the end of these initial efforts, enough students to provide a large kindergarten class and a grade one and two combined class enrolled into this first year of the program.

However, it was evident that some adverse effects seem to have been caused by the promotion and marketing efforts. The Spanish teachers, especially, described the extraordinary media, community and parental interest as causing additional stress for them in the first year of the International Spanish Academy:

> It was a tough year, I can honestly say it wasn't easy! It wasn't. With the cameras coming into the school at random or being the ambassador for the school – the phone calls from parents and the open house!

The first day of the program, in particular, seemed to have been difficult for the teachers and the school principal in terms of dealing with the new students and the media coverage. The chaos of the first day of the new program combined with the media wishing to capture the opening of the program resulted in a very stressful experience for the teachers. However, the media attention lasted well beyond the first day of the program. The teachers reported that they were accepting of dealing with pre-planned media events, especially because of the need for the promotion of their program. However, they expressed their feelings of anxiety and their reservations about having to manage the various unexpected media situations that arose. The interruptions that occurred because of unexpected and unplanned media coverage caused concerns. One teacher stated:

> I don't think media coverage, for one, is really conducive to learning. The kids aren't paying attention and the first time it was almost like I had a good time to prep them and say we're going to keep working, we're going to keep doing our things, it's just act natural. And they were – they were so natural but for the second time they were goofing off and it was because it was just…they came in and they said they'd only be there for five minutes, they were there for a whole period that I taught – 45 minutes. And by the end of it yeah, I was a little choked. I thought this is really unfair to me and I had expressed my feelings I'm sure enough that somehow it must have got to [the school principal] because he left me a nice apology letter the next morning that he'd never do anything like that to me again. But yeah, it was really hard. And then yet you look at yourself and I'm very self critical and thinking what are you going to be like on t.v. because I wasn't sure if they were going to show good qualities and were the students really learning and it was. It was a really nice piece on Global Television where they showed a little bit of what I said and what the kids were doing… It was great, but at the time I felt ok, this is….like what's this all about? And you don't know, sometimes media can turn it around and make it - and it could have been the downfall of this program from that one clip.

In general, those first days of dealing with the heightened media interest were described with mixed feelings of stress, excitement and appreciation. As well, in spite of the additional stresses placed on the Spanish teachers through those experiences, the teachers themselves identified a need for further and constant promotion of the program. They

expressed that this media attention and exposure for the program was key to attracting a constant supply of students:

The staff also recognized that the marketing and promotion aspects would need further time and effort to ensure it is even further expanded and implemented effectively. They expressed that positive promotion through word of mouth was beginning to be used more, but that more promotional activities were needed such as radio coverage, school signage and signs on major roadways nearby, t-shirts for existing students that identify the program, etc. As one teacher said, promotion and advertising was needed "everywhere we can possibly put it – to emphasize that we are an academy, that we are teaching Spanish here!", and that marketing would be key to future awareness of the program by the public, and to the future increased student enrolments into the program.

When reflecting on the first year of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, several study participants identified that the media presented a significant and unusual challenge. It was evident that a planned system or process for managing the initial flurry of media attention and additional preparation of the staff would be recommended for the establishment of any such magnet program. However, all in all, the participants acknowledged that the promotion and marketing aspects supporting the establishment of the International Spanish Academy was vital to achieving the first group of students through the program, as well as to ensuring the program expansion for the second year.

Stakeholders

The data gathered through this study reveals key insights and perspectives from the viewpoints of the various stakeholder groups. Interviews were conducted with a

student, a parent, the Spanish teachers, an English teacher, and the school principal These varied perspectives assist to inform the establishment of future programs. Each of these insights helps to create a richer picture of the elements that interplayed to create this new International Spanish Academy, and describes what has been learned about establishing new second language or bilingual programs.

Students

Examining the establishment of the International Spanish Academy in terms of the characteristics of, the impact on and the perceptions of the students reveals some fascinating insights. The backgrounds and the characteristics of the students that enrolled into this first year of the Spanish program were varied. The school principal indicated that, "as it turns out, probably about half of the people in the International Spanish Academy do not speak Spanish - maybe even more than half and the children are Anglophones…". Even the student participant in this study seemed to be aware of this: "I like my friends, I think they're special. About the Spanish Academy….half of them come from Spanish speaking homes….". The teachers and the parent in the study were pleased with the diversity of students that were drawn to the program. It was evident that students also came with diverse amounts of previous exposure to the Spanish language, and to the Spanish program from various areas of the city.

The students that enrolled in this first year also seemed to be highly motivated to be in this alternative program. One of the Spanish teachers described her students as an "exceptionally wonderful group" that were very happy to attend the Spanish Academy. She reported that the students were "very motivated to come and learn and to have fun", and had very supportive parents.

Examining the students' first impressions of their new language and their new program is of particular interest, as it provides some insights to potential program planners about the potential benefits of providing program orientations to students and their parents in advance of the opening of a new language program. To illustrate, one of the Spanish teachers described the first impressions that she observed from her students on the first day:

> I think they were all like, what's this about? What's learning another language going to be about? Can I really speak another language? Will I really be able to speak another language? I think they were all really impressionable at the time and they were really all…and eager to learn at the moment – very eager to learn and wanting to pick up something to say in Spanish like Ola! Or Buenos Diaz you know?

Another teacher in the study reflected on the first weeks of the students' experiences as they were trying to sort out and develop a concept of what this new language was all about. The data indicated that it may have been beneficial to host some smaller-group orientation sessions for students and parents prior to the first day of school, to acclimatize both adults and children to the International Spanish Academy and to aspects of the language and to aspects of this form of bilingual programming.

In establishing a new program such as the International Spanish Academy, it is also important to be aware of the potential interactions and relationships between students in the specialized program and students in the regular English program. Especially when there are cultural differences embraced by each program, the potential both exists for either a wonderful, harmonious relationship or a conflictual, strained relationship. In this

program, the staff worked very hard to ensure that a harmonious relationship would be established between the two programs. One teacher, though, offered some insights as to how the students developed distinctions between the Spanish kindergarten class and the English kindergarten class, using labels to categorize and make meaning of the differences:

> They have made that distinction. And I don't think the distinction is racist in any way. I think it's just a way for them to understand because I myself will say, "we are going to visit our Spanish kindergarten friends", rather than just saying we're going to the other kindergarten. I want them to realize that there isn't just an English kindergarten but there's another flavor and that's a Spanish kindergarten.

Later, she reported "there [originally] was a real definition between the English kindergarten students and the Spanish". After purposely working on having the students work and play more together, she then reported that the distinctions based on the program or the language backgrounds of the children disappeared, and were replaced by friendships. She reported a significant increase in the children from both the English classroom and the Spanish classroom playing together, inviting each other to birthday parties, and engaging with each other in other such activities. However, this improvement was attributed to concerted efforts by the teachers to do activities together to promote collaboration among the students.

There were other changes of note in the children that were attributed to this new International Spanish Academy experience. For example, one Spanish teacher commented about the impact of the experience on the personalities of the children:

> I've had many parents tell me that their children's personalities have changed. They're a lot more willing to share their feelings and emotions – because I'm always telling them I'm this or that…and it's evident. Even teachers have told me at the school that children that were here last year, this year are like, "Hi, how are you?" [The students] that wouldn't do that last year, are doing it!

One teacher also reported that a student that came from a Spanish-speaking home also was significantly impacted through her participation in the program: "her mom says she can't believe how much she's learned in Spanish. She goes, 'I've tried but she'd just never speak it or talk it and now she knows so much!'" The parent participant also reported watching with fascination the change that her daughter went through in acquiring the second language:

> I have a better understanding of how young kids can be a sponge and just absolutely absorb something that's totally foreign to them - a language that's totally foreign to them, and just grow! So my understanding of that sponge process is greater because it has happened within our home.

Overall, the teachers, parent, school principal and the student herself reported a high degree of student enjoyment, benefit and accomplishment from the program. The student, for example, expressed her love for this new program, and her excitement about the challenge of learning through a new language. The parent expressed a sense of amazement at her children's' responses to their first year in the program:

> It was a positive year. My kids really embraced the language. They embraced the new friends. They really enjoyed their teachers. [My son] cried the first night, you know, couldn't really go to sleep, had to sleep with his classroom picture, was

> going to miss teacher …So, because when your children like to go to school and they're enjoying it and it's such a positive thing, then what more can a parent ask for?

One Spanish teacher described her biggest accomplishment of the year as the students' amazing progress in acquiring the language and the parents' positive responses to this achievement. The other Spanish teacher also marveled at her students' achievements:

> Accomplishments…. seeing my kids speaking Spanish, I can't believe it! I can't believe it! They're all asking me now to go to the washroom in Spanish; anything that they ask me is always in Spanish. Like they're freely speaking it now and I'm thinking "how"? So that's a nice accomplishment!

Examining the students, their perceptions, and the impact of this experience of the first year of the International Spanish Academy provides valuable insights and information for future developers of other similar programs.

This study found that there was much diversity in the students that enrolled in this program, and the students were very motivated and happy attending the program. Attention and effort needed to be given to ensure a harmonious relationship between students of different programs within the school-at-large, but this positive relationship was achieved. Although not emphasized, providing more background information and orientation to this program would have been beneficial to assist the students to understand key components of the program. Overall, the study found that there was strong satisfaction by all study participants regarding the benefits, achievements and satisfaction of students in the program.

Parents

The elements that contributed to the establishment of the first year of the International Spanish Academy were also examined through the perspectives and information provided regarding a key stakeholder group, the parents. From the parents seeking and choosing the program, to their support for their program, to their happiness with the first year of the program, all of these phases illuminate the important role and impact of the parents in the establishment of the International Spanish Academy.

The participation of the School Council in lobbying to have Mill Creek School chosen as the district site for the International Spanish Academy, as illustrated previously, strongly indicates the parental support for the program prior to its opening. As well, their efforts to promote and advertise the program were extraordinary. When asked about the parents' reactions to the announcement that Mill Creek would be the new program site, the parent described it as, "oh, very positive. I mean the parents all were really, really wanting it. So they were honestly very excited!" This excitement was consistently observed and noted throughout the interviews of the school principal and the English teacher, who were staff of the school during that year prior to the program opening.

Parents approached the selection of the program for their children understandably in a much more cautious manner. When asked what the biggest challenge was in establishing the International Spanish Academy, the principal responded:

> Certainly, communicating to the interest group that has an interest in the Academy, getting them to believe in a program where you don't have any teachers, any resources, anything in place. When I think about it, it took a lot of

> courage on the part of our parents to buy into a program that didn't exist - to just buy in. To trust us about what we were talking about. And so I think that's the big challenge – to get people to trust you enough to make a commitment when you don't know what it's going to look like. And that takes courage on their part. Their children are the most precious possessions they have. So I think that's pretty special to make that commitment. So I appreciated it.

The parent in the study echoed his perceptions about the nervousness of some parents about enrolling in a new, as yet invisible, program. In general, not yet having a program in place to demonstrate and show to the potential new parents provided a unique challenge.

By contrast, several study participants revealed some reasons for parents choosing the International Spanish Academy for their children. These included having a heritage connection to a Spanish-speaking country, or family members having had an experience that indicated to them that learning a second language, or learning Spanish, would be beneficial. The teachers indicated playing a strong role assisting parents that were unsure as to whether their children would be suitable for the program. The data revealed that the availability of both regular English programming and the Spanish bilingual programming in the same school was identified as a positive feature impacting the choice of some parents to enroll their children in the school. This information assists in determining some of the underlying factors, reasons and motivations impacting the choices of parents in selecting such a program.

The teacher participants in the study also indicated that once the decision for their children to attend the program had been made, the parents sought many ways to provide

support to their children and to the International Spanish Academy. For example, they indicated that some parents had enrolled in Spanish classes themselves to support their children in their learning. Parents explored other ways as well in which they could help their children when they themselves couldn't speak Spanish or take lessons. A Spanish Kindergarten parent group was established to provide support to the new program. The parent in this study, as well, indicated that "parent involvement was high" in the International Spanish Academy. The school principal and the teachers expressed that they were very happy to have this strong parent involvement in the school.

It was also revealed through the data that the teachers were very conscientious about developing positive relationships with the parents of their students. For example, one Spanish teacher described, "at the beginning, making sure we were all set up to welcome parents". The other Spanish teacher explained, "I have a great establishment of a relationship with my parents about everything. I could tell them about everything – real good communication at all levels. Come in, the door is open, you can sit, listen and help out. I never have my classroom door closed. Never."

Both of the Spanish teachers also echoed that there was a high degree of parent support. One Spanish teacher explained:

> I think the parents are really supportive. I think the parents believe in the value of a second language and they think that the children have been learning. I mean some parents have asked me already, "Do you know where we're going to have the Spanish Academy by the time they're in grade 12 because I'm thinking of buying a home and I want to know if it's going to be in this Mill Creek area?". I say "Well, that's 12 years from now! It's hard to say!" But parents are thinking

ahead and they are thinking of making a commitment with the program. So I think parents are very happy.

Overall, a high degree of parent satisfaction with acquiring the program at Mill Creek School and then satisfaction throughout first year of the program was identified throughout the study, by the school principal, the teachers, and the parent. As one Spanish teacher explained, "I think the parents see it as a great way of their children learning a second language and becoming fluent, becoming bilingual, and doing something with them in the future. So the parents were obviously very happy with it." This important support for the program, and the levels of trust and satisfaction are all critical to foster throughout this important first year of such a program.

Staff

Examining the impact of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy on the staff, and their perceptions and concerns throughout this process provides important information and perspectives to consider for future programs. Throughout the data, there were frequent references to the positive and negative impact of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy on the staff of Mill Creek School. It is important to note that only the study participants that were staff members made these references; neither the parent nor the student study participants made comments in this area.

The process of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy and some of the effects of this process on various staff members have been described in detail in previous sections. In summary, the Spanish teacher reported feeling a range of intense feelings, such as intense excitement, stress, nervousness, uncertainty, loneliness, etc.

Nearer to the end of this first year, they also expressed a high degree of more positive emotions, such as satisfaction in their accomplishments, pride, love for their job and the students, confidence, etc. However, it is important to examine the perceptions of how the establishment of the International Spanish Academy impacted the other staff members as well. It was reported, for example, the opening of the program motivated some of the staff members to enroll in Spanish language classes. The English kindergarten teacher expressed that she felt that there was enhanced recognition, respect for and valuing of the kindergarten program as part of the regular school program; she felt more inclusion of the kindergarten program in the school once the International Spanish Academy opened. The school principal observed a shift in his staff from their comfort zones of being part of a small staff, to a more collegial, sharing and collaborative model. This enhanced collaboration among the staff was a fairly common observation by the study participants, as will be discussed in detail later; however, it is important to note that the staff not only became more collaborative in their day-to-day functions, but reportedly formed very strong friendships throughout the year. And finally, it was also identified that there are some underlying concerns that were caused by the International Spanish Academy successfully moving into the school. It was mentioned that the staff members still may be concerned about their own future roles in the school, especially in light of the Spanish program expansion and the declining English program enrolments:

> The staff members, I think they see the importance of it here at the school yet I can see their concerns too as to where maybe they're going to fit in terms of their program – the English program…Now that the Spanish Academy is growing, we're taking kind of over some areas of the school and others have kind of had to

move and go maybe to another side of the school where it's not so nice. So there are some things that you just feel there's a bit of tension there. They don't say anything. We still get together as a staff, go out socially, but I know there's an underlying concern there. And I think it's normal.

So the opening of this new program did have a significant impact on both the new and the existing staff members in the school. These effects on the staff, and their perceptions and concerns throughout the program establishment should be predicted, attended to and addressed to ensure the successful acceptance of the program by the staff over the long term.

Administration

The role of the school and central administration bears examination, as it offers key insights as to important elements impacting the successful establishment of the program.

During the initial attempt to obtain this program at Mill Creek School and during the initial planning phases of the program, the school administrator was new both to the school and new to the position of school principal. This posed additional challenges to this first phase. To add even further complexity, the school principal was also the lead administrator of two school sites; the challenge of administering to and providing leadership to two physically separate schools added an additional dimension to the challenge. Thirdly, the task of putting all of the essential components into place to support the successful implementation of a completely new program provided even further challenge.

All in all, the study participants indicated that for the most part, the school principal rose to the challenge and provided the necessary leadership. One teacher described his efforts to obtain the program:

> I think we were chosen basically due to a lot of work on [the school principal's] part. I think he was a huge factor in getting our name up there and I think it was because of his hard work and dedication that we got it…[he] took that upon himself and saw the tremendous work that was going on and decided that the school was going to stay open and he was going to work as hard as he could.

Many of the participants in the study identified that the school principal faced particular challenges because of having the two school sites. Although a new assistant principal was assigned to join Mill Creek School, the school principal still expressed a desire to be able to focus on providing leadership to the new program. He himself identified that "…the demands were such of starting a new program that we could have used more administration time", and that "this community would be well-served to have a full time principal at the International Spanish Academy". The teachers echoed his sentiments.

Many of the study participants indicated there would be benefit to having school administration, office staff, and teaching assistants that possessed proficiency in Spanish. As well, the school principal and the teachers indicated a desire to have future instructional leadership specifically to support the Spanish program. The lack of an experienced mentor or coach within the school to provide programming advice and assistance was identified as an area of weakness that could be a potential goal for the school or for individuals within the program to work toward achieving. The principal himself stated:

we're starting to develop some in-house leadership for the growth of the Spanish Academy. And I think that's going to be significant over time to develop a Spanish speaker that's going to be the coordinator for the program. In the long run, I think that would be very significant.

The teachers reflected his thoughts, emphasizing the need for this to ensure quality ongoing support for the Spanish program.

Some mention of the leadership and support from central office administration was made, but this was quite minimally reflected in the data. Generally, the school principal praised the support he received from central office, especially in the area of marketing support for the program. The parent mentioned that the school district's extensive experience in bilingual programming helped through the establishment of the program. The teachers, although appreciative of some of the central support offered, generally highlighted that more central support, especially financial support, would have been beneficial and would have made the start-up of the program easier and smoother. Of particular note were the recommendations made by the school principal to future principals, as these recommendations capture some of the key elements:

> I think for principals they need to get started early, almost as if they were opening up a new building – start the year before and get as much lead time as you possibly can. And also I would suggest hiring a fluent Spanish speaking coordinator, I think that's an important way to go. This person would connect with the principal and the Spanish people here as a mentor for the processes that get more intricate from there on. But mostly lots of lead time, a Spanish speaking coordinator, to be able to put a long range plan into place because once you hit

May and June – when you're doing everything, setting up the program, curriculum, resources. It hits really fast!

In summary, the study participants expressed their appreciation and admiration for the hard work and dedication demonstrated by the school principal. However, their recommendations for future programs indicated that some of the desirable elements were not in place during this program's establishment, such as leadership with experience in this type of programming and Spanish language proficiency, the ability for the school principal to focus solely on the one school, adequate lead time to prepare for the program establishment, enough administration time allocated to supporting the initiation of the program, etc. The data therefore suggested that although the school and central administration were supportive and worked hard to obtain, implement and support the new program, there were many areas for improvement.

The School

Although the school on its own would possibly never be considered a stakeholder, the impact on the school in general emerged as an extremely important factor in the establishment of the International Spanish Academy. Because of this, it is worthwhile to briefly examine this effect.

Throughout the interviews, the adult study participants frequently made references to the school in general, and identified several areas in which the school in general was impacted by the opening of the program. Of special note were the frequent references to the establishment of International Spanish Academy at Mill Creek School as having "saved" the school from certain closure in the near future. The school principal himself stated quite frankly, "This school would be closed if it wasn't for the Spanish

Academy." Even one of the Spanish teachers expressed her view that "... this school was chosen because it needed to be rescued. It was going to be closed down so this was a perfect spot for it." The parent in the study frequently echoed the same concerns. The English teacher expressed that this was also the feeling of many other staff members:

> I can remember our staff saying "wouldn't this be great. This would help our school. Wouldn't this be wonderful? This will really, if we get this, would give us the enrolment so that our school can stay off of the chopping block".

This positive effect of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy was a pervading theme throughout many of the interviews. As well, other secondary effects were identified. For example, the new program and the resulting increased enrolment in the school were identified as adding to the energy, excitement, and bustle of the school. The English teacher recalled the anticipated change in the school social and emotional environment, by describing the new "flavor" that she was hoping would be added to the school through the establishment of the new program:

> Our school principal actually made mention of it during a particular staff meeting, and my first reaction was "wow, this is really going to put some flavor into our school", because our school has, unfortunately, been - the population hasn't been as high as it was when it first opened, and so for me it kind of added, in my opinion, a new flavor to Mill Creek School. I imagined it really would brighten up the whole student body, would brighten up the school in itself. It would just add that flavor which I felt was something that needed to be added to Mill Creek Elementary School.

She later frequently confirmed that this "flavor" had really been added to the school, and that a new excitement and energy had accompanied it. As well, extra resources, such as books for the library, paint for the school, and new furniture were attributed to the new program. The continuing expansion of the program in the next year also continued to impact the school in many ways: "life is going at an amazing pace! We're looking at getting new furniture and new computers and making alterations to classrooms. So it's even busier than it was last year at this time".

On a different note, the impact on the English program of the opening of the International Spanish Academy did not have the anticipated positive impact on the regular program enrolments. As there had been continuously declining enrolments over several years in the English program, this further decline was not directly attributed to the opening of the Spanish program. However, it seems to have been anticipated that the additional attention brought to the school by the International Spanish Academy might yield additional enrolments in the existing program; this was not the case. As the principal described that "originally my feeling was that having more....bringing in the Spanish program would also advertise and bring in more people into the regular program as well. But that hasn't necessarily been true at this point in time." So the impact on the school in general took many forms, but generally seemed to have been perceived as positive. However, during the establishment of future programs of this type, the potential impacts, both positive and negative, need to be seriously examined and considered.

Local and International Communities

In the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, it seems obvious that the involvement of the local and international Spanish-speaking communities would

require significant planning, consideration and focus. However, the participation of these communities, especially the international communities, did not emerge as strong elements throughout the data. The participants did make references to varying degrees regarding the local and international communities. However, the discussions were fairly minimal, and focused on the local community surrounding the school and the local Spanish-speaking cultural communities; references to and discussions about the international communities, especially Spain, were nearly non-existent. This was a very surprising feature of the data that was gathered through this study.

In terms of the local community surrounding the school, this community was described by the study participants as being very much in transition; new houses and condominium complexes were being built throughout the very old, established area. As new young families were moving in to the area, many older community members still remained. These features were seen as having an impact on the existing school population, and possibly as having an effect on the numbers of students available in the local surrounding areas to attend this program. Yet, the local community was perceived as being very supportive, at least in principle, of the International Spanish Academy. The parent participant in this study reported that children in the neighborhood were looking at attending the Spanish Academy in the future. She also explained that, "…in the community league meetings when I go there, you know, people are very interested to hear what's going on and very positive…I think it adds to the community." The school principal as well stated, "It was a good choice on part of the district in terms of the school to put it in – in this community. I haven't heard ever one complaint about the Spanish

program." He later described how this program might eventually impact the larger community:

> I think the Academy has established an awareness of the Spanish language and culture in the community. In the broader sense, that's probably the biggest accomplishment has been, oh yeah, there's a community of value and merit amongst us that is receiving the Spanish cultural and language education. And that's sort of a macro-causing. The micro-causing is we've got these young people coming out that are speaking English and Spanish very fluently both languages in reading and writing. So I think those are the two greatest accomplishments. And eventually that will have an impact on the larger community as well. So you've got this awareness in the community, but I think as the children progress, they'll have an impact in the community as well because they speak two languages. So I think that's been the biggest accomplishment of the International Spanish Academy.

The school principal was also cognizant of the potential for conflicts between the English local community and the new Spanish school community. For example, in the early interview, the school principal described the parent questions that were put forward at a School Council meeting prior to the selection of Mill Creek School as a program site:

> You know, I think it mostly revolved around parents' fears, would the Spanish Academy hijack the community. This is a nice small community with a real warm, caring atmosphere; parents were concerned about growing big, parents' questions about how much in Spanish, how much in English.

He described the proactive efforts to "emphasize an appreciation of the cultural differences", such as school events that purposely mixed the parents from the English program and parents of the Spanish program. So, although this element of community uncertainty surfaced in the interviews, it was minimal and seemed to have been successfully and proactively minimized during the program implementation.

In a similar manner, initial uncertainty and concerns from the local Spanish-speaking communities were also noted by some of the study participants. Again, these concerns seemed to have dissipated over the initial year of the program, and in fact seemed to have turned more towards a collaborative and supportive relationship between the local community groups and the International Spanish Academy.

> At first I think they thought we were competition for them – like one of the schools in particular, and one of them actually asked me to speak at their year end party on behalf of the International Spanish Academy. So there was a big turnaround, and they did share resources with us at the beginning. So maybe at first they were like oh, what is this? Who are they? And then once they realized it was in the Edmonton Public Schools, part of the regular classroom, not a weekend deal, then they realized oh, ok. And we've actually been able to refer some of our parents to them because some parents are really interested. So I think overall in terms of the Spanish speaking community, they are really - they're glad that we have a Spanish Academy. I know that when we were interviewed, [the other Spanish teacher] and I were interviewed right after the Grand Opening by the Spanish Community television and another Spanish newspaper, they were very happy about what's happening with the Spanish.

She later further noted that "the community has really supported this program". In fact, it was identified in the data that the local Spanish-speaking community groups had assisted in marketing and promoting the International Spanish Academy. As well, the sharing of resources had been described and was very much appreciated by the program: "They have been really helpful – I know them personally – they lent us a lot of resources for the beginning of the year. I was able to go and borrow and basically choose what I needed and brought it back." So it was evident that a degree of support and collaboration existed between the International Spanish Academy and the local Spanish-speaking communities. However, several study participants identified a desire to improve upon this relationship, and to connect more with both the local and international Spanish-speaking communities. The school principal, for example, explained that

> it doesn't have the international flavor yet that I'd like it to have. It's still more a local Spanish program. I'm not seeing the connections with the international community I'd like to see. And I've not seen the connections with the local Spanish community either. I think those....that would be a goal for the future – to make those connections stronger. So right now we're pretty much out in our own little world in terms of Spanish bilingual program and I think we need to look at how to make stronger connections to the international community and to the local Spanish community. And I think that's what we need to focus on in the future.

Mention of the international aspect of the International Spanish Academy was surprisingly rare throughout the interviews. The relationship with the Government of Spain was never directly mentioned, and any mention of the previous connections and support from the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain was extremely minimal.

Furthermore, that quotation from the school principal was one of a very small number of any mention of international ties, or the role of the Spanish government in providing the initial incentive for this program, including permission to be called an International Spanish Academy, a structural framework for the program, etc. In another rare reference to ties with Spain, a teacher said, "At first I wasn't sure if the Spanish from Spain connotation was going to really lead it and I've seen that no, I think all the other cultures and countries are really well represented within the program. So I think that's a good thing." All in all, the data revealed a supportive relationship with the local surrounding community and the local Spanish-speaking communities, yet a nearly non existent relationship at the school level with the international communities. This too was identified as an area for attention and focus in the near future.

Emerging Themes

Through the analysis of the gathered data, a very strong set of critical themes emerged. Examining these themes gives additional insights to future planners and coordinators of such programs, as they reveal some of the fundamental underlying workings and elements that were in play throughout the establishment of this program. In an attempt to capture and identify the essence of these themes, they have been given the following labels:

- The Unknown
- The Future
- Collaboration
- Change

Additionally, a similar yet much less pronounced theme of "Competition" was also evident, to much more varied degrees across the participants, in the data. These themes together demonstrate some of the additional currents that need to be considered and attended to during the first year of such a program.

The Unknown

Especially in the early set of interviews, all participants in this study expressed a strong sense of entering into the establishment of the International Spanish Academy with a high degree of not knowing what to expect. Frequently, the study participants expressed that at various stages, they did not really have a clear idea of what the International Spanish Academy would become. This lack of clear vision covered a wide range of aspects, including its initial location, its purpose, the numbers and types of students that would attend, how the program itself would be structured, what the teachers, the classrooms, the resources and the program would be like, etc.

Various thoughts and emotions were expressed as accompanying this future uncertainty; these feelings were expressed in both positive and negative ways. "Negative" thoughts and emotions that were articulated in relationship to this uncertainty included those of fear, loneliness, nervousness, stress, and for some, even devastation. For example, one participant stated, " I think at first there was the fear factor – and boy, this is big, what am I doing? Am I crazy here or what?" Another stated, "I guess feeling that constant aloneness, and I had one of the other teachers say to me, 'teaching is the loneliest profession, because you're on your own.' And I thought, 'You know, you're right.'" Another participant vividly described a student's reaction to the first day of the program: "You know, [the student] was scared the first day, you know, and so there was

crying and grabbing onto my leg, ripping apart and all that kind of stuff. So, you know, there was the unknown." A student herself described her own reaction to the beginning of the program: "On the first day of school I was really, really nervous - I guess I really missed my mom. I don't know why I felt that but it sort of - I don't know, like you don't know your teacher and she speaks a whole other language." One of the teacher participants described this unknown as follows: "At the beginning of the year I had no - like I said before, I was a wet little chicken coming out of a hatched egg and thinking what am I doing?" Although the study participants approached this unknown from a variety of viewpoints, most expressed having some form of these "negative" thoughts and emotions at the beginning of the program.

However, sometimes this movement into the unknown was expressed in a positive sense, through descriptive language using such words as courage, excitement, challenge, trust and opportunity. For example, the school principal praised the parents for their courage and willingness to enroll their students in this unknown future program:

> It took a lot of courage on the part of our parents to buy into a program that didn't exist, to just buy in, to trust us about what we were talking about. I often wonder as a parent if I would do it – buy into a program where I couldn't see the classroom, I couldn't meet the teacher, I wasn't sure what they were doing and when I think about it, that's the biggest challenge.

Similarly, a parent expressed her trust in the unknown:

> There was just lots of confirmations that Spanish would be great for our kids. So I don't think I had a clear idea of what it would be, it was in a public school so it

was going to be....I just thought it would be good and safe and it would be a new grade one/two class.

Although in the data, the quantity of references to the unknown elements in general decreased from the first interviews to the second, the theme of the unknown was still maintained. Instead of reflecting a lack of knowledge about the International Spanish Academy in general, the second set of interviews began to reflect more uncertainty about the future directions that the International Spanish Academy would take, especially beyond this first year. However, this theme was consistently intense throughout most of the data; this indicates that it is an area that deserves attention and focus from future planners of such programs to properly manage and minimize the negative aspects, and to capitalize on the positive aspects of dealing with the unknown aspects of the future program.

The Future

The theme of "future" also emerged from the data of this study. As this theme holds much potential for the empowerment of the stakeholders, and could be used as an energizing force for the short and long-term dedication and continual improvement of the program, it is a concept that deserves careful consideration.

Study participants spoke frequently of the future of the Spanish Academy in their interviews. As the interviews were conducted at the beginning of the program and then again at the end of the first year of the program, the future that was the main focus of discussion shifted. In the early interviews, the discussions centered more on the short-term future, such as upcoming major events, areas that needed to be improved or attended to in the near future, or managing the implementation of the program throughout the

remainder of the school year. The second sets of interviews contained significantly more references to the next school year, and beyond. So the time frame for looking at the future of the program shifted from the shorter-term building of the program, to the vision of the program as it could be in the longer-term future. One teacher even commented, "[we] always talk about 'can you imagine 10, 20 years down the road, we're going to be teaching these brand new teachers coming in about this program and how we did it the first year!'" Conversations about the future beyond the first year included many discussions about new resources, additional teachers and Spanish-speaking classrooms, the growing number of students in the program, possible new features such as school uniforms, new computers, new clubs and Spanish classes for the parents, a new literacy program, future trips with students, and the junior high school site that would house the extension of the International Spanish Academy program beyond grade six. In general, the participants' references to the future were very positive, hopeful and often were expressed with excitement. These positive perspectives of the future seemed to contain much hope and energy, and could be key elements to maintaining the focus on continuing to strive for program improvement.

Occasionally, worries about the future were also expressed, but these worries were mainly expressed within the context that specific decisions would need to be made to ensure continuing success of the International Spanish Academy into the future. For example, worries about the skills and Spanish language proficiency of the future teachers in the program were expressed. For example, one participant stated, "…we need to bring in appropriate teachers to this Academy if we're going to make it an International Spanish Academy that's really successful and represents Spanish. We need to have

teachers that speak and read it 100%. That's my concern, that's my only concern for next year, absolutely." Concerns about continuing to promote and advertise the program to ensure its expansion emerged. Some concerns, too, about the future of the English program in light of the Spanish program expansion were expressed as well. However, such worries about future obstacles for the program to deal with were only occasionally expressed through the data. Instead, a positive outlook about the future of the program and the school were strong, and seemed to carry with it a sense of energy, rejuvenation, and commitment to ongoing program improvement. This positive force, if fostered and managed well, might hold the key for program coordinators for ensuring continuous program growth, commitment and improvement over time.

Collaboration

In the bringing together of a new bilingual program and an existing monolingual program, program planners need to properly plan for the effective and smooth cohabitation of the programs. To do this, a focus on fostering a respectful and collaborative relationship between the stakeholder groups is absolutely essential. In this first year of the International Spanish Academy coming to Mill Creek School, the data indicated that this marriage of the programs, and the respect and collaboration between the stakeholders was achieved. For the future establishment of any such dual track school, this is a key element that must be both valued and fostered.

Collaboration was an extremely strong theme that was frequently evident throughout the data. Especially with the study participants that were staff members, elements of collaboration were frequently highlighted throughout the interviews. Very strong and lengthy discussions about the success and strengths of the collaboration that

developed within the staff over this first year of the program were frequent. Of particular note are the collaborative relationships between the teacher participants. Throughout the experience of establishing the International Spanish Academy, these teachers, who were unknown to each other previously, formed very strong, supportive relationships both on professional and personal levels. Even the teacher participant who originally expressed a high degree of loneliness, later expressed, "At the beginning of the year it was way different – very segregated and throughout the year we've become friends and we're more…we're working more collaboratively together." The kindergarten level teachers, one English and one Spanish, described extensive collaboration in their planning, the development of their resources, preparing for their special activities such as concerts and field trips. They formed the habit of meeting together at the school each weekend, to cooperatively prepare for the next week. As the Spanish kindergarten teacher described, "I meet with [the English kindergarten teacher] on a weekly basis, every Sunday we meet, we plan, and then I take that and adapt it to the Spanish." Throughout the interviews, this strong collaboration and partnership between these two teachers emerged time and time again, with both expressing the great extent to which they valued the collaboration with each other.

The two Spanish teachers also frequently described their support of one another as new teachers to the school establishing a new program:

> Many memorable times with [the other Spanish teacher] – just us two talking and kind of supporting each other as teachers getting through maybe some rough times of feeling overwhelmed – especially at the beginning with not having the resources right there and then.

These two teachers worked closely together to implement and manage many aspects of this new program. In their interviews, they also both expressed a strong interest in providing support to any new, future program teachers, especially in the area of resources, planning and instructional approaches. It was evident, therefore, that this model of collaboration was very much valued, and there were plans developing to extend this collaborative approach to new colleagues in the future.

The parent participant as well expressed a high degree of attentiveness to the importance of collaboration. She made note of the collaboration with and within the school staff, and among the parents of the English stream students and the parents of students in the International Spanish Academy. When reflecting on the success of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, she praised the staff for their increased collaboration, and praised the principal for his leadership in unifying many groups:

> I think [he] did an excellent job in unity. And calming the English-speaking, that this was not to push them out, but it was to enhance what you already had. So, there you go. That was amazingly good. We're here to work together.

When asked what the biggest challenge was for her during the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, she described her own challenge of fostering collaboration from the position of her role as chair of the School Council: "That [biggest challenge] would have been trying to do the unity thing and getting Spanish involved, and not having them feel left out, and making sure the English parents didn't feel threatened". So, throughout the data, it was evident that the stakeholders in the International Spanish Academy successfully recognized the importance of fostering this

collaboration when establishing this new program in an existing school and school community. Through the leadership of the school principal, the parent and the teachers, a collaborative school community was identified as important, and strategies were employed to support and achieve this goal.

Competition

In planning new alternative programs within a school district, especially a school district housing several alternative programs, the potential element of competition must receive some advance consideration. Competition within the school community, as well as outside of the school community, must be carefully thought out and managed to achieve positive outcomes.

In a much less pronounced manner than the theme of collaboration, this theme of competition emerged in the data, with a surprising twist. All of the adult participants in this study demonstrated a strong awareness that the perception of competition within the school needed to be minimized, in order to ensure a smooth and successful implementation of the International Spanish Academy and to ensure success in the English track at the school as well. The surprising element was that a lot of discussion emerged that highlighted the *lack* of competition between the Spanish and English programs and the respective staff members, and the extra efforts that all staff and parents were making to minimize any sense of competition, became instead the focus throughout the interviews. For example, the kindergarten English teacher made special mention of the fact that the school administration was successful in presenting and supporting both the English program and the International Spanish Academy in a balanced manner, stating that he:

> is very supportive of both programs, in my opinion and from what I've seen. And certainly there has been no distinguishing between the two programs. It's been, "we have two kindergarten programs. We are very lucky to be the site of the International Spanish Academy and we have a kindergarten English-speaking program too".

She also described her discussions with colleagues from other schools that expressed concern about the competition between the programs:

> They've said, "Well you know, aren't you worried that the Spanish Academy will get so big they'll push the English program out of the school?" And I said, "I don't think so. I think that you can have a school that can have different languages. I live near Holyrood school and they offer Ukrainian, French and English and it seems to work very well. You've got three different cultures in that school and it works very well in my opinion. Everybody seems to get along".

The notion of competition within the school community was quite absent from the data. So this element of competition although discussed by the participants, was consistently described as not being of major impact within the school.

However, the adult participants in this study did express a subtle awareness that potential threats to the future continuing success of the school, external to the school community, exist. Several participants in the study made note that a similar program was attempting to establish itself in a neighboring school system, and that there were potential adverse effects emerging. Such activities as the advertisement of this new Spanish bilingual program in the community region, invitations to the teachers to become employed in the new program, the possibility of parents choosing to change to the new

program, etc. were all discussion points that emerged in the final interviews. However, these points were only briefly mentioned as being of concern. Therefore, although it was anticipated that the theme of competition may have been stronger throughout the data, this aspect was actually relatively subtle and minimal in the data. In preparation for a new program, however, the program coordinators would benefit from examining the potential for issues related to competition arising, both within the school (especially between the two different programs) and external to the school community.

Change

In examining the data that was gathered through this first year of the onset of the International Spanish Academy, it seems evident that the process of the establishment of the program was fundamentally a process of change for all participants. The theme of change was an intense theme that pervaded the data. Many types of changes were evident throughout the data, especially the following:

- the changes in perceptions by stakeholders in the school and school community, over time, as to what the International Spanish Academy is;
- the changes in the school because of the expanding student enrolment, expanding staff, and the changing cultural environment;
- the phenomenal growth and changes in the International Spanish Academy students, including the changes in their language skills, and changes in their relationships to other children ;
- changes to the structure and make-up of the parent community within the school.
- the changes in staff relationships within the school;

- the development of the teachers, including the sense of personal change and accomplishment in having built a successful program;

As described previously, the advent of the International Academy brought with it a strong sense of speculation and the unknown. Over time, as the program began to take shape, that sense shifted into a focus on what the program was becoming; a vision and a reality were developing, sometimes concurrently. Then, near the end of the first year, there evolved a strong sense of the future directions of the program. This shift in perceptions of the program was a natural process of change.

Throughout this first year, the school in general experienced an enormous change. The new program itself brought on a whole host of changes. Examples such as new paint, new carpet, new classrooms, many more students, more equipment and staff members, a shifting school cultural environment, and a new assistant principal pervaded the data. Within the school, the students in the International Spanish Academy also experienced wonderful changes. Changes in their comportment, their relationships with other students, and changes in their valuing of the Spanish language are sample changes that were noted. But most of all, the phenomenal growth in Spanish language proficiency was noted by many. Therefore, the students were also part of the changes that occurred within that first year of the program.

The school principal and the parent participant in this study highlighted the changes in the structure and make-up of the parent community. The addition of many new parents to the school community, with varied backgrounds and from various communities around the city, contributed to the sense of enormous change experienced by the school.

A parallel experience occurred within the staff at the school. The addition of two vibrant new teachers and their new perspectives and skills strongly impacted the teaching corps. The data revealed that there were very significant changes in the relationships of the staff within the school.

Most remarkably, the staff members closest to the implementation of the new International Spanish Academy, the Spanish teachers, were the participants who expressed the most self-awareness of intensely changing through the experience. For example, early in the study, one Spanish teacher said, "so this is why it's beautiful too. I'm learning so much about this program myself, how it can be better, how I can be a better teacher, it's just - I feel like a student now." Later on, another Spanish teacher reflected on the establishment of the International Spanish Academy, describing the sweeping changes that she felt and observed:

> I feel as a teacher I'm more informed, I think I feel more at ease with the curriculum, so there's good changes in terms of feeling like I have good teaching strategies to teach Spanish specifically to students. Maybe changes in perception I think from staff in terms of the value of what good this program has done to the school. Whereas maybe at the beginning they really didn't know – they knew it would probably be good, but now that they maybe look back and they see the numbers, they see how so many new students and the enrollment can't help but think wow, this is really good! And parents too, who at the beginning were just basically watching, they didn't know either. So those changes - I think all good changes.

It was evident through this study that the foundation of the International Spanish Academy was a multifaceted process of change, with each participant both effecting change and becoming changed. Each participant was seemingly moving through this first year with intensity, building the program while expanding his or her own ways of being and thinking.

The interviews that formed the core of this study provided a forum for reflection on the process of the program establishment. It was evident that the wealth of data that was collected through this process could be viewed in multiple ways. This study chose to examine this process from the perspectives of the key events and how the events were experienced, the foundational elements of the program, key stakeholders, and through identifying major themes that emerged from the data. From revealing these varied perspectives, it is anticipated that many facets of this process can be documented, examined, and made available for the benefit of future colleagues seeking to develop similar programs, for future researchers and theorists to further explore and examine this phenomenon, and also for the benefit of those pioneering participants in the establishment of the first International Spanish Academy in Canada who wish to look back and reflect on a piece of their own personal histories.

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Summary

This case study is a descriptive and interpretive study of the establishment of the first International Spanish Academy in Canada.

In Chapter One, the background to this study is provided, highlighting the importance of the new International Spanish Academy in Canada. This chapter establishes the focus and purposes of this study, an overview of the research methods used, and the limitations and biases of the results that must be considered. It also establishes the significance of this study as providing a foundation of information that will allow for future comparison, theory building, hypothesizing and theory testing. As well, it provides a detailed documentation of the process of the program foundation, including the technical descriptions and the human experiences, therefore providing key information and perspectives to support the future practical applications of the findings of the study.

In Chapter Two, the historical background, rationale and related literature for this unique form of bilingual programming are established. This chapter provides an overview of bilingual education in the local and international contexts. It also introduces the model that is used as the basis for this form of language program, the context into which this program has been placed, and provides the model of bilingual programming that was envisioned for the establishment of the International Spanish Academy.

In Chapter Three, the study design and procedures are outlined, which establish the perspective and parameters being applied through this case study. As well, a

description of the method of interpretation through which the resulting data was approached is provided. Information regarding the impact of the researcher on the study is outlined, as well as the limitations, biases and critical assumptions.

In Chapter Four, the collected data is examined from multiple perspectives and the findings are presented. Initially, the key events and the experiences of stakeholders within those events are documented and analyzed. Then, the foundational elements as seen by the study participants are documented and examined. The insights regarding the key stakeholders in this process are revealed, and then finally, an analysis of the pervading themes that emerged from the data is examined.

Guiding Questions

Question One: How Does the International Spanish Academy Move From a Theoretical Program to an Enacted Program? What Occurs?

The study analysis revealed that this process is very complex, with multiple interrelated elements. A framework of events unfolded during that first year of the program, of which some were planned and some were unexpected. These included elements such as the selection of the program site, the hiring of the teachers, the gathering of resources, and establishing classrooms. The first day of the program was an important event for all of the study participants, and the first weeks were filled with a myriad of tasks and activities such as accommodating the media interest, establishing the format of the program delivery at the classroom level, establishing relationships with members of the school community. Gradually, the program settled into a pattern of routines and daily operations; however, these routines were intermixed with a variety of important events, such as a teacher strike, the grand opening of the International Spanish

Academy, and the first concert involving both the regular English program in the school and the International Spanish Academy. Finally, the year end activities and planning for the second year of the program imposed a new set of tasks and events that formed the conclusion of the initial year of this program. Although on the surface these events appear to be commonplace to the establishment of any new program, this study illuminates the complexities that accompanied the establishment of the International Spanish Academy as a Spanish bilingual program in western Canada.

The extent to which the fundamental elements, such as the program structure, teachers, resources, funding and promotion were in place impacted the transition from the theoretical program to the actual. A gradual process of decision-making and gaining a deeper and deeper understanding of the program structure was evident. Teacher preparation, training, skills and qualities emerged as potentially the most important factor in ensuring a successful program implementation. The limited availability of resources impacted the first year of the program, and funding for the acquisition of resources was an impediment. The media attention and the program promotion also impacted the study participants.

The key stakeholders, comprised of the students, parents, the school, staff, administration and the communities, all played significant roles in this enactment, participating in and therefore impacting the process as it unfolded. The participants in the study experienced these processes and events; their experiences and their perceptions of the processes are illuminated throughout this study, providing key insights into the perspectives of the stakeholders as they moved through the first year of the program establishment.

Underlying all of these processes as well lay currents or themes of the unknown, the future, collaboration, competition and change that reflected the thoughts and concerns of the participants in this process. All participants in this study entered into this first year of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy with a strong sense of entering into the unknown. This was often expressed as causing stress, nervousness and anxiety; however, it was also often expressed as causing excitement, anticipation, and providing a challenge. Throughout the study, the sense of the unknown was maintained; however, it shifted over the course of the study to a focus on the unknown long-term future elements of the program from the shorter term immediate program concerns. The element of collaboration was consistent throughout the course of this study, in which ongoing collaborative relationships and partnerships were being developed, maintained and strengthened, mainly within the school community. Competition, although present, was subtly and purposefully attended to and minimized. Finally, the element of change was intensely evident throughout this study. It was evident throughout this study that the establishment of the International Spanish Academy at Escuela Mill Creek School was a multifaceted and complex process of change, with each study participant both effecting change and becoming changed. These elements, examined in concert with one another, all effectively illuminate the process of the movement of this theoretical program to an enacted one.

Question Two: What is the Experience of Students, Staff, Administrators, and Parents as They Pioneer the Implementation of this New Program?

The study analysis revealed that each event brought about its own unique set of

experiences and perspectives. As a result, the key events of the establishment of the International Spanish Academy were documented and the experiences as reported by the study participants were also recorded, relative to that experience. This provides a sense of a living record of this first year of the program.

The key categories of events that emerged from the data were: the selection of the program site, the preparation for the program opening, the first day of the program, the opening weeks, the daily routines and operations, special events, and the year end and planning for the second year. Each of these events brought about unique perceptions of these events as they were experienced by those involved.

Discussion and Implications

This establishment of the International Spanish Academy was a complex process involving the intricate interplay of events, places, people, and perceptions. As the program moved from a theoretical program defined by documents, agreements and reports, to a living, evolving, daily human experience, it became shaped by the context and the people that eventually were closest to the program: the school principal, the teachers, the parents, the students and the community.

Several aspects of this process have been discovered in this study. The first aspect is that the responsibility and determination of the final "product" of the International Spanish Academy seemed to shift very quickly and very completely to the school from the central administration and the government of Spain. There was little mention of the impact of either of these agents, and very little evidence of ongoing communication, monitoring and influence. The government of Spain seemed to have had very minimal impact on the practical implementation of the program. Once the agreements and

program model were established, the school and school district were allowed a large amount of flexibility in the creation of the program

A second aspect is that the implementation of the new program seemed very much to be a gradual process of understanding and enacting, then deeper understanding and further enactment, in a continuous process. It seemed that the key stakeholders gradually moved through several layers of conceptual understanding of the envisioned program, and as they did this, they then were able to more fully realize and implement the program as envisioned. Although the program model and vision had been communicated in advance in various abstract forms, both through documents, presentations, consultations and other means, these seemed to still become actualised through the process of initial planning, trial implementation, reflection and then restructuring or refinement. Layer after layer, the level of understanding and experience in implementing the program seemed to become more and more sophisticated, especially as the first year progressed.

What are the implications of this study for future researchers? The results of this study provide a foundation of information that will allow for future comparison, theory building, hypothesizing and theory testing. It exposes the events and the human experiences involved in this first year of this new program. Each experience and perspective included in this study could provide the essence for future thinking and research in this important field.

What are the implications of this study for future program coordinators? This study provides a detailed documentation of the process of the program foundation, including the technical descriptions and the human experiences. Therefore, this study

provides key information and perspectives to support the future practical applications of the findings into the establishment of other new programs.

Throughout this study, many recommendations for future program coordinators of similar second language, bilingual or alternative programs became evident. These could serve to assist future programs, and include the following recommendations:

- That a clearly articulated structure and vision for such programs be established, clearly communicated to all stakeholder groups, and adhered to;
- That early approval of such programs by the Board of Trustees be attained;
- That school principals be given a significant amount of lead time the year before the opening of a program, in which to prepare (such as being notified in late fall or early winter the year before);
- That the school principal acquire a Spanish-speaking coordinator with elementary and bilingual programming experience approximately one half year before the opening of the program (to meet with the Spanish-speaking community, gather materials, prepare classrooms, provide mentorship, etc.);
- That the school district provide a large amount of start-up funding support and sustain some financial support over the initial years, to support the additional financial burdens caused by classroom expansion, the need for completely new resources, to support the need for additional teacher preparation time, etc.
- That the central office administration of the school district continue to provide financial and consulting support for promotion, communication and advertising;
- That the school principal hire the appropriate teachers early; that these

teachers have high degrees of fluency in both English and Spanish, as well as elementary level experience and bilingual programming experience, and commitment to this form of programming and to ongoing professional development related to bilingual programming;

- That the school administration establish administrative and physical plans early, to ensure that appropriate amounts and types of required human and physical resources be available and in place in a timely manner;
- That the staff and administration of the new program meet the parent community and local communities very early the year prior to the program establishment;
- That collaboration and unity within the program, school and community be fostered;
- That the program staff host small-group orientation sessions for parents and students prior to the official opening of the program, to acclimatize them to the program components, the staff, the language, etc.

These recommendations, although not exhaustive, can provide guidance to program coordinators charged with the establishment of a similar new program as the International Spanish Academy.

What are the implications of this study for the pioneering staff, students, parent and community stakeholders of this program? This study provides, in a sense, a historical record of the establishment of the first International Spanish Academy in Canada. Key events and the experiences of many participants involved in the pioneering of this unique new program have been documented. This will provide an important record for

stakeholders in this program at this time and for others in the future.

Questions for Further Research

This study is a portrayal of the establishment of the first International Spanish Academy in Canada, which occurred in a particular time frame and social and political context. A study of this type raises many questions and issues for further research, including:

1. The curriculum foundation for the Spanish language component of the International Spanish Academy, the Spanish Language Arts Program of Studies (Alberta Learning, 2002c), includes a large number of general and specific learning outcomes to address the cultural needs and goals of the program. These outcomes include aspects of self-identity, global citizenship, etc. However, the cultural aspects of this program did not emerge throughout the data. How do the teachers address or implement these learning outcomes? What are the cultural needs of the students in the International Spanish Academy, and how are these needs addressed?
2. The participants in this study reported an approximate 50%-50% composition of the students that enrolled into the first year of the International Spanish Academy. They casually reported that 50% of the students have no previous heritage connection to Spanish, while 50% of the students do have a heritage connection to a Spanish-speaking culture. What are the actual compositions of the cultural and heritage backgrounds of the students, and what has influenced their choice of programming? What are their motivations for attending the International Spanish Academy?

3. It has been identified that the influence of the government of Spain was not a major force in the program implementation at the school level. What kinds of official initiatives would improve this influence, partnership and presence of the Spanish government in the program?
4. While the International Spanish Academy was being established in Edmonton Public Schools, a parallel International Spanish Academy was being implemented in Calgary Public Schools. How do the two programs compare? Was the evolution of the two programs similar? How do they differ?
5. Is the International Spanish Academy effective in achieving its vision and goals?

Conclusion

This study documents and examines the establishment of one of the first International Spanish Academies in Canada. It explores the movement of this new, special form of Spanish-English bilingual programming, from a theoretical program through to the end of its first year of establishment. This study identifies several key phases, both anticipated and unanticipated, that emerged as significant within this first year of the program, reflecting this important process and the experiences of those closely involved. These phases were: the selection of the program site; the preparation for the program opening; the first day of the program; the opening weeks; settling in…the daily routines and operations; special events; and the year end and planning for year two.

Within these phases, this study also documents and explores the experiences of key stakeholders, providing a detailed descriptive account of this initial implementation phase of this new alternative program. It identifies key foundational elements, or lack thereof, that impacted the first year of the program. It provides accounts of the

experiences from the perspectives of the various stakeholders, including the school principal, an English teacher, two Spanish teachers, a parent and a student. Finally, this study identifies five themes that emerged, in varying degrees of intensity: the unknown, the future, collaboration, change, and competition. Through these varying lenses, this study offers a rich, multifaceted account of the complex event of the establishment of one of the first International Spanish Academies in Canada.

This event represents an important step forward in providing to students in Alberta a new alternative program that is strongly embedded in and consistent with the emerging context of international relations and globalisation. This new program holds great potential for meeting the needs of the local communities by providing heritage language development support for some families, and by providing to families without heritage links the opportunity to develop language proficiency in two very important world languages. It also holds the potential for beginning to meet the larger societal needs, which include the development of students with the economic, intellectual, and social advantages that strong second language learning opportunities can provide. The establishment of this International Spanish Academy, as intense and complex as it was, is a crucial step toward moving forward into a new millennium of second language education in western Canada.

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APPENDIX A:

GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Spanish Teachers – First Interview

1. Please tell me about how you first heard about the Spanish Academy.
2. What did you think about it at the time?
    a. What did you think it was? What were your initial understandings and perceptions?
    b. How did you feel about this?
3. How did you come to be hired into this program?
    a. What was the sequence of events you were involved in?
    b. What was that like? How did you feel about things at the time?
4. How did you find out that you were to a teacher in the program? What else happened at that time?
5. What was it like to receive news that you would be a teacher in the program? What else were you told at the time? What was that like? What were your reactions?
6. Then what happened? What events followed?
7. What did you need to do? What needed to happen? Who did the various tasks? Were there any guidelines, parameters, directions? What were you told about your job? About the program?
8. What was that like for you? What was it like for your family?

9. How was it decided that the actual program happen?/that it would be feasible and viable?
10. Who made those decisions? What else happened at that time? What was this like?
11. How was the information shared with others? What were the reactions from the various individuals and groups?
12. What was it like to share the news that your school would be the site? What was that like? What were your own feelings and reactions?
13. Then what happened? What events followed?
14. What did you need to do? What needed to happen? Who did the various tasks?
15. Were there any guidelines, parameters, directions?
16. Was there any support for you and this work to be done?
17. In what areas did you not feel you received support?
18. What was that intensive planning phase like for you? What was it like for your family?
19. How did the elements of your program get put together? How was the following done:
    a. planning
    b. Preparation of your classroom
    c. Mentally preparing yourself for teaching in this program?
    d. Finding resources
20. Please tell me about the first day of the program.
21. What happened?
22. What was it like?

a. For you?

b. For the other teachers?

c. For your school principal

d. For the parents?

e. For the kids?

23. What is happening now?

a. In the program?

b. In the school? For teachers? For students?

c. Elsewhere? (central services, parents, community, etc.)

24. What is it like for you right now?

25. What are you needing to do now, at this point?

26. What do you think it will like for you in the next months?

27. What do you need to do?

28. What events will be happening?

29. What will be your role?

30. What do you think the next few months will be like for you?

English Teachers - First Interview

1. Please tell me about how you first heard about the Spanish Academy.
2. What did you think about it at the time?
3. What did you think it was? What were your initial understandings and perceptions?
    a. How did you feel about this?
4. What did you do to find out more about this program?
    a. What was the sequence of events you were involved in?
    b. What was that like? How did you feel about things at the time?
5. How did you find out that your school was to be the designated site? What else happened at that time?
6. What was it like to receive news that your school would be the potential site? What else were you told at the time? What was that like? What were your reactions?
7. Then what happened? What events followed?
8. What did you need to do? What needed to happen? Who did the various tasks? Were there any guidelines, parameters, directions?
9. What was that exploratory planning phase like for you? What was it like for your principal? Your English program colleagues? Others (i.e. community members, parents, etc.)?

10. How was it decided that the actual program would be feasible and viable?

11. Who made those decisions? Did you have any input or any role at that time? What else happened at that time? What was this like?

12. How was the information shared with others? What were the reactions from the various individuals and groups?

13. Then what happened? What events followed?

14. What did you need to do? What needed to happen? Who did the various tasks?

15. Were there any guidelines, parameters, directions?

16. Was there any support for you and this work to be done?

17. What was that intensive planning phase like for you? What was it like for your staff? Others (i.e. community members, parents, etc.)?

18. How did the elements of this program get put together? How was the following done:

    a. Staffing

    b. Preparation of the physical plant

    c. Preparation of your existing staff and structure?

    d. Communications to all of the affected or interested parties?

    e. Resourcing

19. What was it like to have new staff members join your staff? Did you interact with them a lot at first? What was that like?

20. Please tell me about the first day of the program.

21. What happened?

22. What was it like?

f. For you?

g. For your principal?

h. For your Spanish colleagues?

i. For the English teachers?

j. For the parents?

k. For the kids?

23. What is happening now?

a. In the program?

b. In the school? For teachers? For students?

24. Do you work very closely with your Spanish counterpart? What is that like for you?

25. What is it like for you right now, to be teaching alongside the Spanish program?

26. What are you needing to do now, at this point, because of the Spanish program?

27. What do you think it will like for you in the next months?

28. What events will be happening?

29. What will be your role?

Questions for School Principal - First Interview

1. Please tell me about how you first heard about the Spanish Academy.
2. What did you think about it at the time?
    a. What did you think it was? What were your initial understandings and perceptions?
    b. How did you feel about this?
3. What did you do to become involved with this program?
    a. What was the sequence of events you were involved in?
    b. What was that like? How did you feel about things at the time?
4. How did you find out that you were to be the designated site? What else happened at that time?
5. What was it like to receive news that your school would be the potential site? What else were you told at the time? What was that like? What were your reactions?
6. Then what happened? What events followed?
7. What did you need to do? What needed to happen? Who did the various tasks? Were there any guidelines, parameters, directions?
8. What was that exploratory planning phase like for you? What was it like for your staff? Others (i.e. community members, parents, etc.)?
9. How was it decided that the actual program would be feasible and viable?
10. Who made those decisions? What else happened at that time? What was this like?

11. How was the information shared with others? What were the reactions from the various individuals and groups?
12. What was it like to share the news that your school would be the site? What was that like? What were your own feelings and reactions?
13. Then what happened? What events followed?
14. What did you need to do? What needed to happen? Who did the various tasks?
15. Were there any guidelines, parameters, directions?
16. Was there any support for you and this work to be done?
17. What was that intensive planning phase like for you? What was it like for your staff? Others (i.e. community members, parents, etc.)?
18. How did the elements of this program get put together? How was the following done:
    a. Staffing
    b. Preparation of the physical plant
    c. Preparation of your existing staff and structure?
    d. Communications to all of the affected or interested parties?
    e. Resourcing
19. Please tell me about the first day of the program.
20. What happened?
21. What was it like?
    a. For you?
    b. For your staff members?
    c. For the teachers?

d. For the parents?

e. For the kids?

22. What is happening now?

a. In the program?

b. In the school? For teachers? For students?

c. Elsewhere? (central services, parents, community, etc.)

23. What is it like for you right now?

24. What are you needing to do now, at this point?

25. What do you think it will like for you in the next months?

26. What do you need to do?

27. What events will be happening?

28. What will be your role?

29. What do you think the next few months will be like for you?

Questions for Parent – First Interview

1. Please tell me about how you first heard about the Spanish Academy.
2. What did you think about it at the time?
    a. What did you think it was? What were your initial understandings and perceptions?
    b. How did you feel about this?
3. What attracted your initial attention to this program?
4. What did you do to find out more about this program?
    a. What was the sequence of events you were involved in?
    b. What was that like? How did you feel about things at the time?
5. How did you eventually get more information about this program?
6. How did you find out that your school was to be the designated site? What else happened at that time?
7. What was it like to receive news that your school would be the potential site? What else were you told at the time? What was that like? What were your reactions?
8. Then what happened?
9. Why did you decide to put your child in this program?
10. How did you come to decide this?
11. Was your child involved in the decision?
12. How did you talk to your child about this program? What was your child's reaction? What did he think the program or school was? Can you tell me about

any of the conversations that you had about it? What was it like for you to discuss this with your child?

13. How did you prepare your child for the first days of school? For the program in general?
14. What were the reactions from those around you about your decision?
15. Please tell me about the first day of the program/first day of school for your child.
16. What happened?
17. What was it like?
    a. For you?
    b. For your child
18. What were your initial reactions, as the program first unfolded?
19. What were your child's initial thoughts and feelings about the program?
20. What was the beginning of the program like for you? For your child? Your family? Others?
21. Did any of your ideas change about the program, as your child was involved in it during the first weeks?
22. Were there any interesting stories that you can tell me about the first few weeks?
23. How were you involved with the program at the beginning?
24. What are your thoughts about the program now?
25. Are you still satisfied with your decision?
26. What is happening now? What kinds of discussions do you have with your child? What are his thoughts about the program?
    a. In the school? For teachers? For students?

27. How do you feel about the program right now?

28. What are your perceptions about the program now? Has anything changed in the way that you perceive/feel about/understand the program?

29. How are you involved with the program now? What is that like?

30. What do you think it will like for you in the next months?

31. What events will be happening?

32. What will be your role?

Questions for Student – First Interview

1. Can you show me some things in your class?
2. (Student to give a short tour of his class)
3. Can you show me your desk? Your notebooks?
4. Wow-nice book! What kind of book is this?
5. Did your teacher ever read this to you? What was that like? What was it about?
6. What is "Spanish"? Why do you have a Spanish book in your class?
7. What do you think about your new classroom? About your teacher?
8. Is there anything else that you think is special about your classroom?
9. Is there anything else that makes your classroom different from the other classroom?
10. What kinds of things does your teacher teach you/do you do in class? What do you think about those things?
11. What did you do today? Did you do that in Spanish? What was that like?
12. What do you do when you learn mathematics? Can you show me some of your math work?
13. What is it like to learn math in another language?
14. What are you going to do after recess? What is that like?
15. What's your favorite part of the day? What do you like to do best in your school?
16. Can you tell me about something fun that you did here at school?
17. What do you NOT like about school? Can you tell me about something bad, or that you didn't like, that happened in your class or in school?

18. If you could do anything in the whole world, if you were the boss or the teacher, what would you do in your classroom?
19. What languages do you know? What's it like to know how to say something in another language?
20. Do you like learning Spanish? Speaking Spanish? Why or why not?
21. Why do you think your mom and dad want you to learn Spanish? Why?
22. When you are really big, are you going to speak lots of Spanish? Why? Where?
23. Do you remember the first time your mom and dad talked to you about learning Spanish? What did you think then?
24. Right before you started school this year, do you remember talking about learning Spanish at school? What was that like?
25. What did you think it would be like? How did you feel? (Were you scared/excited/etc.)
26. Do you remember your first day of school? What happened? How did you feel?
27. What was it like after the first days?
28. What do you think about it now?
29. What do you think it's going to be like for the next little while?
30. Do you want to ask me anything?

Questions for Spanish Teachers – Second Interview

1. Can you describe the kinds of things that are happening NOW at the ISA?
2. Have there been any interesting events for the ISA recently?
3. Are there any things happening NOW to finish up the year that are different at the ISA than other schools?
4. Can you describe your first year at the International Spanish Academy?
5. What has it been like for you?
6. What are some of the key events of the year that you can remember?
7. What were some of the other highlights of the year?
8. Were there any smaller yet still memorable things that happened that you can share?
9. How has this experience been different from a regular teaching experience?
10. How has that been for you?
11. What were some of the "lowlights" of the year?
12. What would you say were some of your biggest challenges?
13. What do you feel were some of your biggest accomplishments?
14. What would you say were some of the biggest challenges for the establishment of the ISA?
15. What would you say were some of the biggest accomplishments of the establishment of the ISA?
16. Thinking back to when you first began your experience with the ISA, how would you describe the year?
17. What changes have you seen happening?

18. What changes, if any, have you yourself experiences?

19. Have you noticed any changes in the concept of the ISA itself?

20. If you were asked to advise others who were to open and establish the ISA, what would you give as advice to:

    a. the teachers

    b. the principals

    c. the planners, or central office staff

    d. the parents

    e. the potential students

Questions for English Teacher – Second Interview

1. Can you describe the kinds of things that are happening NOW at the ISA?
2. Have there been any interesting events for the ISA recently?
3. Are there any things happening NOW to finish up the year that are DIFFERENT at the ISA than other schools?
4. Can you describe your first year being involved with the International Spanish Academy?
5. What has it been like for you?
6. What are some of the key events of the year that you can remember?
7. What were some of the other highlights of the year?
8. Were there any smaller yet still memorable things that happened that you can share?
9. How has this experience been different from your regular or previous teaching experience?
10. How has that been for you?
11. What were some of the "lowlights" of the year?
12. What would you say were some of your biggest challenges?
13. What do you feel were some of your biggest accomplishments?
14. What would you say were some of the biggest challenges for the establishment of the ISA?
15. What would you say were some of the biggest accomplishments of the establishment of the ISA?

16. Thinking back to when you first began your experience with the ISA, how would you describe the year?

17. What changes have you seen happening?

18. What changes, if any, have you yourself experiences?

19. Have you noticed any changes in the concept of the ISA itself?

20. If you were asked to advise others who were to open and establish the ISA, what would you give as advice to:

    a. the teachers

    b. the principals

    c. the planners, or central office staff?

    d. the parents?

    e. the potential students?

Questions for Principal – Second Interview

1. Can you describe the kinds of things that are happening NOW at the ISA?
2. Have there been any interesting events for the ISA recently?
3. Are there any things happening NOW to finish up the year that are DIFFERENT at the ISA than other schools?
4. Can you describe your first year at the International Spanish Academy?
5. What has it been like for you?
6. What are some of the key events of the year that you can remember?
7. What were some of the other highlights of the year?
8. Were there any smaller yet still memorable things that happened that you can share?
9. How has this experience been different from a regular principal experience?
10. How has that been for you?
11. What were some of the "lowlights" of the year?
12. What would you say were some of your biggest challenges?
13. What do you feel were some of your biggest accomplishments?
14. What would you say were some of the biggest challenges for the establishment of the ISA?
15. What would you say were some of the biggest accomplishments of the establishment of the ISA?
16. Thinking back to when you first began your experience with the ISA, how would you describe the year?

17. What changes have you seen happening?

18. What changes, if any, have you yourself experienced?

19. Have you noticed any changes in the concept of the ISA itself?

20. If you were asked to advise others who were to open and establish the ISA, what would you give as advice to:

    a. the teachers

    b. the principals

    c. the planners, or central office staff?

    d. the parents?

    e. the potential students?

Questions for Parent – Second Interview

1. Can you describe the kinds of things that are happening NOW at the ISA?
2. Have there been any interesting events for the ISA recently?
3. Are there any things happening NOW to finish up the year that are DIFFERENT at the ISA than other schools?
4. Can you describe your first year with your children attending the International Spanish Academy?
5. What has it been like for you? For them?
6. What are some of the key events of the year that you can remember?
7. What were some of the other highlights of the year?
8. Were there any smaller yet still memorable things that happened that you can share?
9. How has this experience been different from a regular program experience?
10. How has that been for you?
11. What were some of the "lowlights" of the year?
12. What would you say were some of the biggest challenges of the year, relative to the Spanish Academy experience?
13. What do you feel were some of the biggest accomplishments for your child?
14. What would you have wished differently?
15. What would you say were some of the biggest challenges for the establishment of the ISA?

16. What would you say were some of the biggest accomplishments of the establishment of the ISA?
17. What do you think are the key reasons for its success, and further growth?
18. What do you think are the perceptions of the ISA? From others? The public? Other parents? Students?
19. Thinking back to when you first began your experience with the ISA, how would you describe the year?
20. What changes have you seen happening?
21. What changes, if any, have you yourself experienced? Your child? Your view of education, or the education system?
22. Have you noticed any changes in the concept of the ISA itself?
23. What difficulties do you remember encountering as you began at the ISA? What was not so difficult? Do these difficulties still exist? Have new obstacles cropped up?
24. If you were asked to advise others who were to open and establish the ISA, what would you give as advice to:
    a. the teachers
    b. the principals
    c. the planners, or central office staff?
    d. the potential parents?
    e. the potential students?
25. Is there anything else you wish to say about your experiences with the ISA?

Questions for Student – Second Interview

1. Can you describe the kinds of things that are happening now at the ISA?
2. Have there been any interesting events for the ISA recently?
3. Are there any things happening NOW to finish up the year that are different than in your school before?
4. Can you tell me about your first year at the International Spanish Academy?
5. What has it been like for you?
6. Can you tell me about some of the things that happened through this year that were special?
7. What were some of the other highlights of the year?
8. Can you tell me about any fun or special things that happened in your classroom?
9. Did anything special happen outside of the classroom? Any special events?
10. How was this year in the ISA different from your other years at school?
11. What were some of the yucky things about the year at the ISA?
12. What would you say were some of the hardest things about the ISA?
13. What were the easiest things?
14. What were the "funnest" things? What were the boring things?
15. What would you tell other kids about the ISA?
16. What would you tell other parents about the ISA?
17. What would you tell other teachers about the ISA?
18. Thinking back to when you first began your experience with the ISA, how would you describe the year?
19. What changes have you seen happening?

20. What changes, if any, have you yourself experienced?

21. What kinds of things helped make the ISA "good"/ successful?

22. Where there any things that you didn't like? Any problems?

23. If you were asked to advise others who were to open and establish the ISA, what would you give as advice to:

    a. the teachers

    b. the principals

    c. the planners, or central office staff?

    d. the parents?

    e. the potential students?

24. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your Spanish school?

APPENDIX B

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

February 13, 2001

TO:	Board of Trustees
FROM:	E. Dosdall, Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT:	Request for International Spanish Academy Alternative Program
ORIGINATOR:	A. McBeath, Department Head
RESOURCE STAFF:	Karen Bardy, Ann Calverley, Gloria Chalmers, Manfred Malzahn, Ken Spillett, Stuart Wachowicz

RECOMMENDATION

That the establishment of the International Spanish Academy alternative program from kindergarten to grade twelve, beginning in September 2001, be approved.

* * * * *

Background: In a June 20, 2000 board report (Appendix I), the administration advised that it was exploring the possibility of opening an International Spanish Academy, beginning with kindergarten to grade two in September 2001 and expanding through grade twelve in succeeding years. The exploration involved discussions with Alberta Learning regarding curriculum development and resource identification, with the community regarding support for the concept, and with schools regarding an interest in providing a location for such a program.

Alberta Learning is supporting the development of a provincial kindergarten to grade twelve Spanish Language Arts Program of Studies. Edmonton Public Schools received the contract to develop this curriculum in cooperation with the Calgary Board of Education, a consultant provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain and a representative from the University of Calgary. A first draft of this curriculum has been prepared and feedback is being solicited from educators, parents and community members across North America, as well as parents who are considering the program for their children. As well, Alberta Learning is planning to initiate a call for resources to support the program.

Response from Spanish heritage groups and media in the city was positive. They have been helpful in advising the community of district plans. Through the use of these sources as well as mail outs to city preschools, day cares and our schools, 124 families have indicated an interest in such a program.

Several district schools advised of their interest in offering an International Spanish Academy program. Based on criteria such as space availability, geographic location and accessibility

from different areas of the city, Mill Creek Campus, Mill Creek/Ritchie School has been identified as the most suitable location for such a program.

Rationale for Recommendation: The memorandum of understanding between the governments of Alberta and Spain supports the establishment of an International Spanish Academy within an Alberta jurisdiction. The administration in its feasibility study has confirmed that there is support from the general public, the business community and Spanish organizations. As Edmonton Public Schools has been the leader in the development of Spanish curriculum and in offering language programs, it has the expertise and experience to implement such a program. Also, given the preponderance of the Spanish language in the United States, Mexico, Central and South America, the administration believes that this alternative provides a significant benefit to students.

Proposed Program:

Name: International Spanish Academy. There are currently a number of American jurisdictions in the process of establishing International Spanish Academies. The Spanish government assists academies in terms of consultant availability, identification of resources, eligibility for the Spanish "visiting teacher" program, teacher training courses at Spanish universities, student exchanges, and development of educational projects with Spanish schools using internet support.

Curriculum and Program Focus: The International Spanish Academy will be structured similarly to other bilingual programs in the district and the province. The languages of instruction will be English and Spanish with a ratio of 45 per cent Spanish and 55 per cent English in grades one to six, 40 and 60 per cent in grades seven to nine and 25 and 75 per cent in grades ten to twelve. The kindergarten program may exceed 50 per cent of the instructional time in Spanish. The intent is to enable students to achieve enough oral and written competence in both languages to successfully communicate and utilize English and Spanish as languages of learning.

The Spanish language content of the program will be delivered in part through the use of the provincial Spanish Language Arts Program of Studies. This will occupy 25 per cent of the instructional week in kindergarten through grade six, 18 per cent in junior high and 12.5 per cent at high school. Spanish Language Arts will contain the study of linguistic elements specific to the Spanish language as well as general language arts skills that parallel those found in the English Language Arts Program of Studies. It will support the use of the Spanish language in real-life activities appropriate for the context and the group of students, as well as for the communication and exchange of information and ideas between district students and Spanish speakers around the world.

A core academic subject, following the Alberta Program of Studies, will also be delivered in the Spanish language. The plan will see mathematics targeted as the core academic course taught in Spanish. Resource availability as well as a number of pedagogical considerations have guided this decision. Mathematics will occupy 10 per cent of the instructional day in the elementary years and 13 per cent and 12.5 per cent respectively in junior and senior high. Through the elementary and junior high grades physical education and/or music and health would comprise an additional 10 per cent of the instructional time in Spanish. The foregoing will meet the requirements of the International Spanish Academies and also the outcome requirements of the Alberta Programs of Study.

The program's cultural component, outlined in the Spanish Language Arts Program of Studies, will be integrated throughout both Spanish Language Arts and the other subject areas and schooling experiences of the students.

The language and culture components will accommodate the National Standards for Spanish Learning and the Spanish content established for each educational level by Spanish legislation. There is an expectation that connections will be made with other areas of study and that the Spanish language will be used both within and outside of the school environment. The cultural component includes intercultural skill development and the exploration and appreciation of diversity and similarity of Spanish speaking cultures around the world.

The general instruction will enable students to be aware of the value of cultural diversity. It will involve students in an interdisciplinary projects approach in which Spanish skills can be utilized in other selected subject areas, and provide opportunities for interactive and meaningful learning through collaboration and integration of new technologies when and where appropriate.

Grades Involved: It is a kindergarten to grade twelve program. In the first year, it is anticipated that kindergarten to grade two will be offered, with an additional grade being added each year until it is offered at grade twelve.

Size and Location: The intent is to begin with one class per grade at Mill Creek Campus, Mill Creek/Ritchie School and to open programs in other locations, if and when student numbers warrant it. A junior high site will not be identified at this time as we anticipate that conditions will change during the four or five years it will take to have a grade seven class.

We would be prepared to offer kindergarten, kindergarten and grade one or kindergarten to grade two depending upon enrolment.

Admission and Oversubscription: Admission to the program will be consistent with board regulations on student accommodation and open to all interested and qualified students. As with all other district bilingual programs, knowledge of the second language is not required for admission at kindergarten or grade one. Principals may admit a student at a higher grade depending upon a student's knowledge of the target language, in this case, Spanish.

If the program is over subscribed for September 2001, available spaces will be filled by random selection. When a student is admitted by random selection, siblings will be admitted as well. Students who live in Edmonton will have priority over those who do not. As noted above, if demand were to exceed available space at Mill Creek Campus, Mill Creek/Ritchie School, the establishment of a second program location would be considered.

Staffing: As it is a language alternative, the district's language proficiency screening process will apply. Also, it is desirable that teachers in the program be in possession of the *Diploma Basico de Espanol como Lengua Extranjera* (D.E.L.E) or be in the process of preparing themselves to obtain this certificate. As well, staff will be encouraged to maintain active contact with members of the Spanish educational and cultural community.

Hiring will be done from among current district staff who apply for the particular positions. New hiring would only occur if there were no suitable candidates currently on staff, and then only from applicants acceptable to the district's personnel department.

Student and Program Evaluation and Review: As with all district programs, students will write district and Alberta Learning achievements tests. Upon completion of the first two levels of the program, that is kindergarten to grade five and grades six to eight, students will receive a diploma certifying their attendance at the Spanish Academy. For the last level, that is grades nine to twelve, an outside examination is required at each grade if the student is to receive the international certificate. The outside examination focuses on the language and culture component of the program. The yearly examination will be carried out with the collaboration of the teaching staff responsible for the language and culture component of the program. The examination will be used to evaluate the ability of the student to use the Spanish language in real-life situations.

There is an expectation that the International Spanish Academy will develop a program evaluation plan and report on a yearly basis on the objectives and measures identified in the plan. The district tests and satisfaction questionnaires, as well as the external examinations, will be useful as indicators of the success of the program.

Funding: The basis on which funds would be allocated to Mill Creek Campus, Mill Creek/Ritchie School would be the same as for other district schools and programs. This alternative program would qualify for a multiple program allocation on the same basis as other schools or programs. It is also intended to provide the school offering the program with an establishment grant to allow for the acquisition of textbooks and basic instructional supplies. The amount of the establishment grant would be $265 per student enrolled as of September 30, 2001 and for additional students registered as of September 30, 2002. This is the same amount given to new schools for textbooks and supplies.

Transportation: Transportation will be the responsibility of parents. All students will be eligible for a subsidized Edmonton Transit pass. At a cost to parents, yellow bus service will be provided for elementary students. Because bus routes are designed once students' addresses are known, it is not yet possible to be specific about the geographic area to be served. However, it is expected that it would be the area south of the river, and part of the city north of the river.

GC:dh

APPENDIX C

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

June 20, 2000

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dosdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Spanish Academy

ORIGINATOR: A. McBeath, Department Head

RESOURCE STAFF: Janice Aubry, Ann Calverley, Gloria Chalmers, Stuart Wachowicz

INFORMATION

Edmonton Public Schools is currently exploring the possibility of opening a Spanish Academy in September 2001. The program would open as a kindergarten to grade two offering in its first year, and expanding through grade twelve in succeeding years.

The present memorandum of understanding between the governments of Alberta and Spain makes reference to exploring the establishment of such a school within an Alberta jurisdiction. Academies are assisted by the Spanish government in terms of consultant availability, identification of resources and eligibility for the Spanish "visiting teacher" program. Highly qualified teachers from Spain can serve as both instructors as well as teacher mentors for teachers in the school and for those teachers of Spanish elsewhere in the district, adding strength to the International Language program as well.

A location for the program would be related to available space, community interest and long range projections for enrolment.

There are currently six Spanish Academies operating in the United States but none in Canada. Given that Edmonton Public Schools has been the leader in the development of Spanish curriculum, it makes sense for the district to seriously consider this opportunity. It can enhance our leadership role in languages, and help us to better serve other districts both in sharing expertise and through the use of the Academy as a mentoring site for teachers of Spanish from all parts of the province.

The district senses significant interest in a Spanish program of this type from our communities. Strong support exists within the business community as there is an accepted awareness of the need for growing capability in Spanish to meet the needs of the manufacturing and trading sector. Overall community interest will be further examined.

The benefits to students lie not only in developing a good understanding of Spanish language and culture, but upon the completion of the grade twelve year it may be possible for some students to acquire education credentials both from Alberta and Spain. There will also be opportunities for students to study in Spanish cultures abroad. The Spanish Academy will further strengthen the district's commitment toward creating opportunities for building intercultural knowledge and understanding amongst and for students in our community.

Much exploratory work remains to be done in terms of curriculum, identification of strong teachers of Spanish and in work with our communities. The benefits however, of such a collaborative partnership among Edmonton Public Schools, Alberta Learning, Spanish authorities and possibly other school districts, are significant.

SW:dh